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David Irvine

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# Magnesian's Midsummer Madness

— "Nun tobst du wieder wie toll!"



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A WAGNERIAN'S  
MIDSUMMER MADNESS.



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# A WAGNERIAN'S MIDSUMMER MADNESS.

BY DAVID IRVINE,

AUTHOR OF

"WAGNER'S 'RING OF THE NIBELUNG' AND THE CONDITIONS OF IDEAL MANHOOD,"

AND

"'PARSIFAL' AND WAGNER'S CHRISTIANITY."

"That way Wagner-Madness lies."

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW,

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LE VICOMTE.       Maraud, faquin, butor de pied plat ridicule !

CYRANO (*ôtant son chapeau et saluant comme si le vicomte venait de se présenter*).

Ah ? et moi, Cyrano-Savinien-Hercule de Bergerac. (*Rit.*)

LE VICOMTE (*exaspéré*).

Bouffon !

CYRANO (*poussant un cri comme lorsqu'on est saisi d'une crampe*).

Ay ! . . .

LE VICOMTE (*qui remontait, se retournant*).

Qu'est-ce encore qu'il dit ?

CYRANO (*avec des grimaces de douleur*).

Il faut la remuer car elle s'engourdit . . .

—Ce que c'est que de la laisser inoccupée !—

Ay ! . . .

LE VICOMTE.       Qu'avez-vous ?

CYRANO.           J'ai des fourmis dans mon épée !

CYRANO DE BERGERAC,  
Premier Acte, Scène IV.

## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HIS work should have been furnished with a sub-title ; but, since that may be read between the lines of the book itself, it is superfluous. Moreover, since this is going to be a book of summer madness, it may be advisable to run a streak of sanity through it, not only to prevent an otherwise inevitable monotony, but to effect a somewhat similar result to that produced by the boy who showed teleological and economical happy-thoughtfulness in asking a blessing over the whole barrel of pickled herrings. Charity can cover a multitude of sins equally as well as a blessing a whole barrel of herrings ; and the previous exercise of the charity which discharges critics of moral responsibility in attacking Richard Wagner claims at least as much credit as the happy-thoughtfulness of the boy. This charity, indeed, asks for no excuse. It blesseth him who gives and him who takes. It relieves



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critics of an otherwise certain dishonour on this particular field, and gratuitously advises them to seek honour on others, where temptation to court irresponsibility is not so strong. Critics (like other folk, so no offence to them) are so touchy concerning their honour that one is forced to regard this touchiness as a saving grace, for were it not conspicuous, one might doubt very much whether, apart from touchiness, we had any positive knowledge of what honour means. On the anti-Wagnerian writings this irritable feature is writ large. To be touchy about one's honour, when one's policy is rooted in dishonour, may be no great sign of the positive existence of honour, but subjectively it is very good evidence.

But my charity, it must be admitted, has its limits. I do not dive into the secret thoughts of the anti-Wagnerian. In being charitable enough not to hold him responsible I do not proceed arbitrarily to deprive him of that intelligible side to character (to speak with Kant) before which his responsibility might ultimately come to be tried. I say simply this: *I*, in my own right, do not hold him responsible. The question is not raised. The rest of the world can do as it likes.

That does not affect my standpoint. An objective fact is here under consideration, and the subjective aspect is left to put its head out of the pickle in the manner best suited to it, if it is in the barrel at all.

Something, however, must be said in explanation of that to which language is so apt to commit one, in spite of all disclaimers. Usually language is a bully, and in the hands of a pushing lawyer a double-dyed bully. Be as circumspect as you like, fine down your distinctions never so much, certain entanglements will be charged to you solely in virtue of the inherent force and ambiguity of the language you must employ, if you want to talk or write at all. Consequently, when a book is avowedly written—as in this case—with the intention of proving that certain critics, bitten with an unholy desire to damage Wagner at any cost, are——? Well now, here is the trouble; this is just the difficulty in question: what exactly are they?

When Mr. Arthur Jones produced his comedy *The Liars* at the Criterion Theatre, the *Times* took exception to the title. There is no doubt something very opprobrious about this self-same

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word LIAR. A man does not like to be called a liar—does not, indeed, care to hear the word at all; and usually, if he has been led into using it himself, in an excess of indignation, or in view of the extreme provocation caused by what is apparently the most deliberate untruthfulness, he regrets subsequently, out of a hidden feeling of shame, the employment of the extreme term. The selection out of a graduated scale of words from “mistake” up to “lie” can only be justified by a corresponding deliberation and consciousness with which the individual utters his lie.

In the case of Mr. Jones's comedy, if conscious deliberation is made the test of what justifies the title “lie,” it is difficult to know what other title could have been selected. If I am walking to the station with another, and tell him that he has ten minutes to catch his train, when he has only five, and should he thereby lose his train, having believed me—have I told a lie, or only made a mistake? Who can tell, except myself? and is it likely that my disposition to tell will be keener if I had some deliberate, vicious purpose and end in view for my own selfish benefit, in causing the train to be missed? How is

evidence to settle a matter which no one can satisfactorily settle but myself? Mistake, exaggeration, misrepresentation, equivocation, fib, prevarication, fabrication, deception, falsehood, mendacity, lie, and the pithy adjectives which are now additionally lent to qualify the severest word,—who is able to fit exactly the occasion with the word which designates the amount of conscious intelligence and deliberation employed?

Evidently every one who writes a book to bring such accusations against others is tormented with difficulties. In the first two of these essays I am going to deal with conspicuous examples of critics who, in respectable magazines, and under the editorship of worthy men of letters, profess to conduct others to a train of thought which is to enlighten us on Wagner's meaning; and I am convinced and mean to prove that they are—well, half an hour too late, let us say, for the train. *They were told the wrong time by something.* Were their watches slow? Anyway, whatever the cause, they are late for the train by a full half-hour. But in their case we know nothing of a deliberate lie. I limit their lateness to half an hour. Maybe the half-hour is, after

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all, only a mistake, and perhaps two hours are necessary to constitute a lie. A miss, however, for me is as good as a mile. The objective fact would be still attained were they no more than one minute too late; and it is with this objective fact alone that I am concerned. We have to catch Wagner's train of thought—not to miss it by a fraction of a second.

So I beg my readers to keep in mind this objective fact alone. The critics are not accused of conscious falsehood; but none the less, what they have been at such pains to assert is not true. The little philosophy I was ever able to understand does not elevate intellect to such a primary position as makes it the source of our good or of our bad actions; and thus it teaches that, long before that crafty graft on man's will had grown into self-consciousness, and therewith incurred responsibility, there existed enough in the nature of man to account for what prompts individuals in general to commit errors, and anti-Wagnerian critics in particular to abuse and misrepresent Wagner.

At the same time, so far as the taking of offence by these gentlemen is probable, at what I have

to say about them, I know well enough that if I attribute their Wagnerian abuse and misrepresentation to nothing else than the *cacoethes vituperandi* of a blind malice, their vanity must be just as hurt as their honour would be if I accused them of conscious mendacity. But I doubt if the lawyers could make as good a case out of it; otherwise the first man they may as well get out of his grave is Schopenhauer, to try him for a libel on the whole human race. The Royalists took this revenge on Oliver Cromwell; and these held in their day much the same position to the Protector as University philosophers do now to Schopenhauer. Intellect, nevertheless, must surely play some part in the warfare of critics against Wagner. People do not get invited to contribute to magazines of the standard of *The Musical Times*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Nineteenth Century*, *The Edinburgh Review*, and have their productions passed by that vigilant authority the Editor, without priding themselves on their intellectual capacity for deliberate purpose. But I have nothing to do with the endorsing of their conscious self-satisfaction, even though they may pride themselves on it. So I beg to relieve myself of all responsibility

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for the tyranny of language by declaring once for all, over the whole pickle, that I neither take the question of the deliberateness of falsehood into account, nor is it my business to acquit them of it.

So I will limit myself to the words "mistake" and "falsehood," the latter being used in the sense of a hood thrown over Wagner's ideas, which gives the public a false impression of these ideas. Surely these gentlemen will not grudge me the privilege of demonstrating that Wagner's intentions have been obscured, if I can honestly do so. This is all that is undertaken by me here. As to whether Wagner's writings and ideas are sound sense or sheer imbecilities, I do not here raise the question, just as I do not raise the question as to the deliberate consciousness of the blind victimization, by an unconscious bent to defamation, of these critics who persistently misrepresent him. After my own essays I offer two translations from the German by fellow-Wagnerians, who, in giving me permission to translate their works, have no idea of what I am committing them to, by including their work under the same title as I am not ashamed to place my writings. It may

appear as if I should be ashamed ; but those who read Huxley's controversies in *The Nineteenth Century* with certain lights of the Church will not forget how he closed a memorable essay with the words :

“It will not be long before all men of common sense qualify for a place among infidels.”

Whether the authors of the essays here translated prefer on the one hand to be summer mad with me, or talk sound sense with anti-Wagnerian critics, I will not decide for them ; but I hope this book will lead them to a choice. Fortunately, since a rose by any other name smells as sweet, the self-christened believer has no advantage over the branded infidel, or the sound-sense critic over the summer madman—till *something* is decided. To what that *something* is exactly, this book means to be a contribution. Maybe a larger number than ever will prefer to qualify for a place among infidels and madmen if what clericals and anti-Wagnerian critics represent is sound sense.



## I.

### *THE ANTI-WAGNERIAN OF THE PRESENT.*

**D**ID the bent of mankind incline to detect humour in its broad reaches, instead of in quibbles and cranks of the hour, a genuinely laughter-provoking process, now in operation, might be observed, which is of itself sufficiently engaging to tumble humourists of bygone ages hastily out of their graves, to seize on it for their theme of just derision. But folk are nowadays content to allay their thirst in this direction by sips of Yankee cocktails and corpse-revivers, across the counter, instead of quaffing out of broad-rimmed goblets the ambrosial nectar of Olympian wine-presses. Away in some antipodal quarter of the globe they were, once on a time, boring for petroleum. At a certain depth ominous rumblings and shakings took place, which plainly showed that the intruder was disturbing the repose and exciting the wrath of the demiurge by unceremoniously tickling some

*The anti-Wagnerian of the Present* 11

tender part of his inwards. And similar is the result of the gradual penetration of the drift of Wagner's *Prose Works*, and the underlying philosophical idea of his dramatic tone-poems, into those sublimely haughty centres of orthodoxy and learning. Most assuredly there is no more sportive way of repelling an unwelcome visitor of this kind than by making an exhibition of his inferiority and *gaucherie* in the presence of a host of Admirable Crichtons in their various lines of life—*i.e.* if you are positive that the intruder is actually inferior and *gauche*. Otherwise it is those who laugh last who laugh longest; and in this world of amusing contradictions, where, according to Lord Beaconsfield, it is always—why always?—the unexpected that happens, there is just a remote suspicion of the possibility that in the case of Wagner the leek will have to be swallowed by the haymakers who, at present protected and coddled under the enervating warmth of a tropical sun of orthodoxy, are sublimely oblivious of the existence of that garden product. And yet one might have thought that the fate of the anti-Wagnerian of old would not have been entirely lost on them. Surely nothing ever happened that called, with greater

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need, for caution in this respect. To quote an author who, in his own words, has no defence of Wagner in view, nor a smoothing over of difficulties in order to get in sideways a spoke in the wheel of criticism which shall serve that purpose: "It will be found that, speaking broadly, the whole history of criticism has been a triumph of authors over critics."\* But no anti-Wagnerian will learn this from history; and yet some of them pose as the philosophers of history. Without being so stupid as to think that the impending discomfiture of the anti-Wagnerian camp is more than presumptive evidence in favour of Wagner's case, we must at any rate make an endeavour to sound the wisdom with which Wagner's line of thought is nowadays ridiculed. That there is wisdom in genuine ridicule every one will admit. When, however, wisdom is offered under the form of ridicule from within the tropics of orthodoxy, where leeks are not grown, but supplied from outside, then we are inclined to treat it in the fashion recommended by Solomon, advising us "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what 's before thee." And so we will, for we are a bit suspicious

\* Moulton, *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*.

of all rulers who bask in the rays of orthodoxy. What is before us, with regard to anti-Wagnerian criticism, is certainly very much more worthy of considering than it is worthy of swallowing—a fact that still does not make it of itself even worthy of considering. And this admission leads us to answer a question which doubtless will arise in the mind of the inquisitive reader. If it is not worthy of even considering, why bother to consider it? Well, in the first place, that is to prevent innocent people from swallowing it; and in the second, infused as I am myself, like all Wagnerians, with a desire to carry on the Wagner mission among the slums and backways of the East-end of intelligence, which is of course the West-end of fashion, I am never entirely devoid of hope that the most rabid of anti-Wagnerians will cease to worry, and become convinced of the error of his ways. Failing that, I am commissioned by a perfectly natural process, wherein not the vestige of a spook has had any influence, to suggest a working method for anti-Wagnerians—namely, that if they wish to win the battle, they should positively assert their faith around their own special philosopher, rather than confine

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themselves to throwing dirt at Wagner. There has been too much of that to disguise any longer its real meaning, and it is high time anti-Wagnerianism should write some name on its banner.

Now, it is of prime importance to know what hope can be entertained that what is going to be urged will have beneficial effect on these anti-Wagnerians themselves. Cannot we make them share in the profits of our "diligent consideration," and thus, cannot we get them to swallow their leek with at least as much decency—though that is very little—as the poor critics, in the past insisting that Wagner was an envious, disappointed man, who, having come to an end of the miserable little stock of melody which ever he could call his own, struck out a line whose originality lay, by sheer shift of bounce and self-advertisement, in hypnotising servile followers in the belief that he—after all—did have melody? What hope, I ask, is there of persuading those who have now stepped into the trenches on the dead bodies of their forerunners that the hopelessness of their task can be best measured by examining the value of their assertions? Maybe

the following parallel will show what hope there is. Some sixteen years ago a Major-General or a Lieutenant-Colonel—they cannot be so very far apart, judging by the sound—Hime published a little book called *Wagnerism: A Protest*, wherein the valiant officer ridiculed the late Mr. Hueffer because he volunteered to show that *Tristan* possessed melody just as *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* did. Where, then, are *our* senses? how do we fail to see it, if that is the case? were his contributions to the anti-Wagnerian cause. Well now, when Major-General or Lieutenant-Colonel Hime propounded this question with the beaming countenance that suits the man who knows he is right in the presence of a helpless opponent, he just put one of those questions which can be best answered by asking him to demonstrate how the melodies of Mozart have an existence when the fact is patent that to a donkey you might play them all day in company with Sullivan's or Offenbach's melodies, and the donkey would never so much as betray a particle of interest, not to speak of a sense of differentiation. Did you ever, dear friend, hear Mr. Pinero's *The Amazons*? We are at present getting quite

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a lot of plays with the indispensable social idiot. Here he is one Galford, Earl of Tweenways, and his special idiocy in his everlasting WE. With him it was sufficient for the matter to have interest for others, to arouse in the noble Earl a claim to base his disinterest and nonchalance on the fact that his ancient family were high above these things. "WE loathe music." "WE always deliberate before expressing OUR views." And no less the gouty diseases and tendency to vicious practices of the noble Earl were part and parcel of those ancestral qualities which make even the worst of them superior to the healthiest virtues of the despised others who had not a "WE" behind and before them. How could you have persuaded an Earl of Tweenways that Wagner's *Tristan* had melody if some one dared before the Earl to assert that it had not? "WE loathe Wagner," would have been his conclusive argument; and in his imbecile helplessness of saying more to prove it, he would have found a refuge and a comfort in the refrain that "WE"—i.e. the whole blanky family—from the time they came over with the Conqueror, possessed all along an innate abhorrence of Wagner; a matter which may well be

## *The anti-Wagnerian of the Present* 17

believed by every one, as it is the greatest mistake to think that Wagnerism was born on the 22nd of May, 1813. Wagner was, I believe, born on that day; but Wagnerism! oh dear, no. Under some other name it was always needed to combat the ever-existing families of the Earls of Tweenwayses.

And now just translate this anti-Wagnerianism of the past, which knew not any criterion for proving the existence of melody in *Tristan*—at one time it was *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*—except by the standard of the individual person, into the present question of the sense and argument of Wagner's *Prose Works*, and ask, On what different footing do we stand? What can convince those who at any cost must try to "down" Wagner that these works possess the healthiest and plainest of common-sense? And just as Mr. Hueffer undertook to prove melody in *Tristan*, I assert that I will undertake to prove sense in the *Prose Works*; but *à quoi bon*? I should like furthermore to know what there is about the man Wagner which makes people who enjoy positions on the staffs of journals, solely on account of a given intelligence, turn themselves at Wagner's very name into walking contradictions of that very intelligence. A red



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rag to a bull is not so excitable as the claim is to some people that in Wagner we have an exceptionally clear and honest thinker who must be made known. Just as of old the assertion that *Tristan* contained melody could turn an otherwise, we may assume, estimable officer of Her Majesty's army into a specimen of that inconsistency which makes its own negative capacity and its very disease something better than the affirmative capacity and healthy vitality of others, so to-day we have Wagner's comments on those topics of the day which are of perennial interest to us all held up as something which at the best was an amusement to him when he was not composing such things as his unmelodious operas. What can be said for these infatuated individuals?

Well now, it is always a matter of extreme importance to notice from what a high quarter and under what lofty patronage—if even no more than the patronage of silent acquiescence—this opposition comes. There is always a period in the irresistible penetration of the unwelcome, because searching, thought of a lofty genius, when it is advisable to allow a light-weight to enter the

lists to do the preliminary hullabalooing and gesticulating that is to scare the intruder out of the ring. In the first place, such a procedure relieves the great Panjandrums themselves, who sit "dressed in a little brief authority" in unapproachable solemnity within the secret places of the ark of orthodoxy, of any necessity of ultimately subscribing to the assertions and proofs advanced by their uncalculating and unbacked early champions. Fortunately for the one as well as for the other, when the time comes that even the mightiest of the mighty are compelled to take notice of the intruder, all the feuilletonage of the early opposition receives decent interment ; the ancient light-weight can either square up to some one else or retire altogether, while the mighty individuals in whose interest it was all undertaken are able to disclaim all responsibility. It is a very pretty arrangement. Nature, where seated aloft in high places, has got a keen eye for eventual possibilities. It keeps its mouth shut so as not to commit itself. But were the mighty in learning themselves to deign to enter the lists at the present day, what a spectacle we should have provided for our entertainment ! I do not think a more

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mirth-provoking idea could present itself to the mind than that of dishing up, let us say as the Christmas annuals of various journals, a dozen essays on Wagner's prose by an equal number of renowned leaders of English culture : let us say from the pens of three sleek bishops ; three beetle-browed Nonconformist parsons, who look on the theatre as sin—they would need a Christmas to themselves—three spruce politicians, preferably from the Conservative party ; and three pets of our fashionably artistic-minded society. But we need expect no such treat.

“Those wounds heal ill that men do give themselves.  
Omission to do what is necessary  
Seals a commission to a blank of danger ;  
And danger, like an ague, subtly taints  
Even then when we sit idly in the sun.”

And yet the whole drift of Wagner's meaning is something so evident and so unmistakable that to affect not to see it is just to lay ourselves open either to the charge of cowardice and evasion or ignorance and stupidity. Every one who has the slightest knowledge of what evil is wrought by leaving things unseasoned because they, without season, cannot be seasoned to their right praise .

and true perfection, knows enough to divine Wagner's grand aim of seasoning things by season ; and thus in the broad sense Wagnerism is just a new phase of a battle that has been carried on ever since, among men, there was intellect enough to discern that people were being offered for acceptance things that in no wise represent what they are offered as.

But it is just as well to be clear here on our position. All that is undertaken in this essay is not put forward to show that Wagner is right, not even to show what he means, but that his opponents are wrong. If these anti-Wagnerians of the present wish to play havoc with Wagner and Wagnerians, they will need to set about it in another way. Assertion is not proof, and such individual incapacity to see what others see is nothing more than a touching exhibition of the "double pomp" of individual incapacity. Nothing more, did I say? Well, in the anti-Wagnerian case it is a good deal more, because the airs these gentlemen give themselves who carry on the thankless business of orthodoxy's attorneys are altogether something utterly too concrete to designate by a negative term

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It is just like our friend Galford, Earl of Tween-ways. It was not enough for him to have gout in his family. He must needs be so proud of it that he elevated it to a virtue when compared with the miserable healthiness of his neighbours. Poor Galford ! Poor anti-Wagnerian ! And don't be petulant. Outside your fatal defect I mostly find you in possession of a full quantity of that admirable common-sense of which one and all of us are so justly conceited ; that ordinary common-sense which, in making us so effectively point the finger of scorn at the lamentable follies of others, at the same time has developed alongside of it the wary and sagacious art of successful fence. Thus in other respects you yourselves do not throw your powder in the face of your opponent and then run away ; you take delight in your resources, and badger and hamper him with a thousand devices ; you lead him into this snare and into that ; you flatter him for the moment that he can beat you, and then disappoint him just to that amount which does not discourage him to the point of retiring. The spectators are delighted, the opponent justly admires your cleverness ; and after it is all done, beaten or only

postponed, we all enjoy a glass of wine, and remain good friends, laughing over our little tricks, advantages, and shifting fortunes. But bless you! in Wagner's case, how do you conduct yourself? Possession is (or was; thank God we are now getting possession) nine points of the law, and with this advantage you are not contented. Let us just observe the kind of method that is in employment by you to "down" Wagner at any cost, oblivious to the possibility that you are only throwing all the laws which govern fair play, open field, and no favour, to the winds.

There are three very tricky means at hand for setting to work to persuade the ignorant public and interested fellow-thinkers that Wagner is a humbug. One is seriously to beg that Wagner be refused a hearing at all, another is to ridicule his claim to be heard, and the third is to make a grand display of analysing his thought, and in this display then to show him up in what you kindly have made out to be his own folly. People are far too busy to set to work to analyse the pseudo-analysis. A lie gets a long start in this life, we all know; and unscrupulous journalism is just the most effective conductor for this round-

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the-world journey. For us now a hop, step, and jump will pretty well cover the field of journalism on which these methods get their airing. We will hop on to a daily, step on to a weekly, and finally come down with such a crash on to a monthly that, with the increasing impetus aided by the springy nature of the takes-off, it may be hoped the ink-slingers will finally awaken to acknowledge that no reason exists under the sun why Wagner should not have meted out to him the same fair play that wins in other cases the character of gentleman to an adversary. It is not fair play to urge that a man should not be heard; it is not fair play to ridicule a man who is engrossed in debating the same question as that which interests you; it is not fair to put either half the truth or whole misrepresentations into Wagner's mouth, distorting his sense, and then to appeal to an interested audience to join in condemning him.

But there are wonderful journalistic aspects of this Wagnerian question, which would make us first try and weigh it in its entire enormity; for always between a contributor's work and its publication, there stands the Editor—that responsible being. We need not suppose that in

any of the cases in point the Editor wrote the articles ; but in each case we may presume he read them first, and had the usual power of curtailing or altering them so that they presented an appearance in conformity with the style that pervaded the rest of the journal. Why, on fields of musical and dramatic criticism, the Editor should retire to allow some fish out of water to so disport himself that an application of a similar style to the rest of the journal would infallibly make the said journal the laughing-stock of the literary world is one of those mysteries we will inquire into in the third of these essays. Editors from an official point of view are mostly politicians and commercial men, whose quality of morality is required to be just select enough to carry them through and no more, and it is known to be a mistaken policy and a breach of diplomatic reserve to parade any more ; but even that quality need not blunt a man's capacity for understanding that certain obligations are at least as necessary to one sphere of journalism as another. I wonder, if the editor of the *Weekly Sun* of 1896 were to let riot run throughout his paper and himself employ the following kind of palaver, what his position as



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a literary man would be. The worthy who was allowed to air his personality in its columns under the pretence of writing on music entertained his readers one Sunday morning with the mysterious news that if Sir Augustus Harris ever produced *The Dusk of the Gods* he would get up and buy a gun. Some one interested in the matter, and possibly having some closer acquaintanceship with the writer, fearing an outrage, wrote to know, among other animadversions on the critic's opinion, what was to be the outcome of this apparently disconnected threat, and got for answer next week that it would be to shoot "silly Wagnerians who write silly letters to the papers." What would one have thought if the *Times* had indulged in this kind of thing when Sir Henry Irving announced the production of Tennyson's *Becket* or Goethe's *Faust* at the Lyceum? Yet, as we shall see presently, in its line the *Times* can show an instance little better. Now, what is an editor for, if not to check this kind of trash, for his own sake? Why should our music and our drama be so dragged in the dirt of such commonplace journalism? Cannot people have some respect for the profession in general and their own papers

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in particular? Well, I assert they have mostly that respect; but when it comes to Wagner, the very man who, of all others, entertained the highest respect for Art, then every one but he who loves Wagner loses his head.

But in the case of the specimens from the three journals we are going to consider, there is another editorial aspect of the question, which must surely occur to some people. Let us conceive that some person was as fairly convinced in his own mind that Tennyson's poetry in its total aspect is not deserving of the encomiums lavished on it; or as fairly convinced that Ruskin, in his well-founded tirades of the purest English against existing practices, was highly unphilosophical; or as fairly convinced that Sir Henry Irving was not the great actor people make him out to be;—as anti-Wagnerians are convinced of Wagner's faults: and that this person now wrote a well-reasoned and un-personal article, where every assertion was accompanied with proof which stood every test that honest criticism ought to stand:—what sort of competition would there be on the part of editors to give the first publicity to any such criticism? None, we need assert without fear of

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contradiction. Now if we can prove our selections to be sheer abuse of Wagner, or preposterous demands concerning Wagnerians, that have found their way so quickly past the otherwise vigilant Editor into the journals in question, we want to know what it is that makes the acceptance of the MS. so simple in the one case of petulant abuse, while in the other, in spite of calm, reasonable argument, there is no desire to consider the views of a man, who is acknowledged to be the greatest genius of his age, and in consequence of the terrible confusion which exists among religious sects, may be deemed worthy of a hearing. In other words, what sanctity surrounds one set of prominent men, which not only keeps their problematical short-comings from fair discussion, but permits of many articles of lavish praise, while for another any nonsense is good enough, if only it ensures misrepresentation? For my part I know of scarcely one political paper in London that at present is ready to allow fair consideration of Wagner in his total aspect ; there seems to be an opinion that Wagner must be slighted. Let any one read the *Daily News* or *Truth*—just as instances—on the subject of the performances of

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the *Ring* in London during the season of 1898, and see what sort of cheap, worthless sneers the writers indulge in to get in a side blow at Wagner and Wagnerians.

And now we will just review the situation before subjecting certain views from the *Times*, the *Spectator*, and *The Fortnightly Review*—for these are our journals—to a criticism of the way justice is dealt out to Wagner and Wagnerian writers. We take it for granted that the time has passed for any resumption of the question as it struck Wagnerians of the past. At its commencement we stood on the verge of taking into consideration Wagner's music as melodious and dramatic. That was opposed by all the bitterness and falsehoods which could be commanded for the occasion. Now we stand on the verge of taking Wagner's written views on society and religion, through the medium of Art, into consideration, and we are threatened with a repetition of the same bitterness and falsehoods. We want to save people from themselves. We have no objection to the discussion of the matter, but the ordinary laws of fair play have to be respected. If Wagner is wrong, then take what he said, and

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no more and no less, in order to prove it. In reality, if people could only accustom themselves to see it, the whole force behind Wagner's views is something too well and too long established to permit of the idea that he has advanced anything novel. The novelty about the case is that it is exactly the usually despised or society-petted artist whose insight in this case has been so perspicacious as to have struck far into the root of the matter. Usually the artist who has escaped the abuse or the pampering and patronage of the West-end of Society, apart from his art, only growls uneasily like Beethoven, but his uneasiness, however pronounced, is not expressible logically or philosophically. A Beethoven may write an *Eroica* Symphony, dedicate it to Napoleon, and then indignantly strike out that dedication; a Shelley or a Byron may feel imbued with the same feeling of rebellion against a moral pseudo-authority: but that feeling can only get coherent expression from a dramatist and thinker like Wagner. Thus the views of Wagner have actually long surrounded us quite apart from him; but the revolution against accepted ideas has never found such an ally in Art, and it is now only

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necessary to gain some clear idea of how Wagner brought his mind to dwell on the questions which interest us all. As to whether they are right or wrong we do not discuss here. But as regards the question as to whether we have a right to give them publicity *just as Wagner urged them*, without being ridiculed—that we do insist on. And when this palpable right is obstructed I beg to assert that that is evidence in favour of their power, not of their weakness. The obstruction proves a fear to face Wagner's views. It will be seen, then, that this right is obstructed by the varied resources which, under changing conditions, have from time immemorial lain at hand for the unthinking and unscrupulous. Why Wagner should not be heard as he announced himself, or as we honestly think he did, is the main dispute between Wagnerians and anti-Wagnerians of the present day. They admire his music, and there their intelligence in the matter ends. Beyond us and them there lies now the great public, growing with sure steps into its intellectual majority, in spite of the fact that orthodoxy keeps it back as best it can. We assert that when that public knows Wagner as

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he must be known, the biggest step towards that majority will have been taken that ever the intellectuality of the interested public took. Mr. Havelock Ellis has well said, in his *Affirmations* :

“Wagner takes off the stigma that clings to the word ‘common,’ and brings to all the means of attaining spiritual freedom ;”

for which let all the people be eternally grateful. Naturally, comfortable orthodoxy hates such a man, and keeps a true knowledge of him back. As a law which should guide discussion in these matters, I will quote a saying of Mr. Gladstone :

“Certainly one of the lessons life has taught me is, that where there is known to be a common object, the pursuit of truth, there should also be a studious desire to interpret the adversary in the best sense his words will fairly bear, to avoid whatever widens the breach, and to make the most of whatever tends to narrow it. These I hold to be part of the laws of knightly tournament.”

We will see how the anti-Wagnerians of the day make these laws a part of their knightly tournament. In a review of Mr. Chamberlain's book on Wagner, on September 24, 1897, the *Times* said :

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"Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and the rest, asked for no propagandists. They did not require explaining. Surely now Wagner is in imminent danger of being over-explained. At any rate, students are allowed to discover little for themselves, for their 'teachers' must, at the present rate, exhaust the subject. 'The only intelligible history of music should be taught by means of correct and beautiful performances of classical works,' said Wagner. May we not then say, for pity's sake let us hear more of Wagner's music, and arrange a close season for books explanatory of it and its author's history, books which describe the man, his clothes, his methods, his theories—in fact, all that is his."

So "the rest" asked for no propagandists, did they not? As to "asking," what has that to do with it? Did Beethoven ask Herr Carl Reinecke to write those explanations of his sonatas which appeared lately in *The Monthly Musical Record*, or did he ask Sir George Grove to write his book on the nine symphonies, or Signor Colombani to write his on the same subject? But this "rest" puzzles me considerably. Go into a library, and look at the books on Job, Buddha, Christ, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, St. Paul, Plato, Mohammed, Dante, Calderon, Shakespeare, Kant, Burns, Hegel, Byron, Ibsen, and so on—as many



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more as ever you like. What about them? Have the books and articles written on these men and their views called forth a demand from the *Times*, for "pity's sake," to hear (or read) more of such works, and arrange a close season explanatory of them and their author's history, etc.? Again, the writer forgets that three-fourths of Wagnerian explanation consists in refutations of the grossest misrepresentations that ever accumulated about a man. Why not, "for pity's sake," cry out, in the first instance, against these, on account of their falseness, not certainly on account of a man's privilege to write on Wagner as well as any other subject? The *Times* tells us the subject will soon be exhausted. What subject? Wagner's clothes! Ask Mr. Joseph Bennett. He has, of all men I have read on Wagner, betrayed the greatest interest on that part of the Wagner question, and, as is common with anti-Wagnerians, in such a manner as succeeds in misrepresenting Wagner. Otherwise, let the questions under the above names from Job onward, and the millions of others, equally as well be exhausted. I am afraid the critic of the *Times* must make up his mind to have some very bad quarters of an hour, for

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Mr. Edmund Gosse has told us, in the *North American Review* of August 1898, that no such activity has hitherto existed as exists at present in the production of commentaries on Shakespeare's life and work. By all means arrange for a close season, but let it be in the output of all literature. As far as Wagner is concerned, in a few years we shall have a goodly number, even in England, where, to the writer's knowledge, not one single book—unless we include the above-mentioned officer Hime's *Protest*—has been yet written by an Englishman, critically or constructively, on Wagner.\* Here and there there exist some small treatises on *The Ring*; and Mr. Ashton Ellis was compelled to write a little book vindicating Wagner from gross misrepresentations in Präger's book, *Wagner as I Knew Him*: but that is all, excepting the defunct "Meister."

And now we commence the opening out of the subject of Wagner as a man and author, with an appeal from the *Times*, of all papers, to cease, "for pity's sake," what has not actually yet begun, as far, at any rate, as England and Englishmen are concerned. Translations from

\* This was written before Mr. Newman's book appeared.

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the German by Englishmen have not been taken into account.

One wonders, Does the *Times* object on principle to Mr. Ellis's translation of Wagner's own prose? For that alone is a firebrand, and, let us hope, as I know it will be, a purifying one, in the camp of anti-Wagnerianism. Therefore, for the anti-Wagnerian the more criticisms of that undertaking in the press the better. How many have so far appeared? However, a time will come. Thus I assert it is a little early and savouring of petulance to cry out at the very commencement of a perfectly justifiable and natural proceeding, "for pity's sake," to put an end to it. There is a huge mass of falsehood to be cleared away, gross misrepresentations to be dissolved. We want Wagner to be known in his true light, and we are going to do our best to effect this. What sort of reason is it to pour misrepresentation of Wagner on the field, and then cry out, "for pity's sake," to stop Wagnerian journalism that shows up the misrepresentation? If people would only come to understand that demands for restriction are unjust and preposterous only when they draw the line round an individual or shut off artificial

precincts to apply to them the arbitrary demands, while all the time others kick up their literary heels in every precinct when and where they like at sweet will, then they would cease, "for pity's sake," to urge this ridiculous demand before ever Wagner, the man as he actually wrote and thought, is as much as touched on in England. That a writer in such a prominent journal as the *Times* protests against the treatment of Wagner's views in general, and does not deem it necessary to say a word against the ever-increasing misrepresentations which surround him, is just exactly a sign of *the times*. If people really want us to cease writing on Wagner and his views, then first of all they must appeal to others not to give us occasion. *Que, messieurs les defamateurs commencent?* This is all too obvious, so we may hop off the *Times* and step on to the *Spectator*.

Although the surface value of the *Spectator's* contribution to the anti-Wagnerian dilemma is inconsiderable—as far as I know, a two- or three-column criticism of Präger's *Wagner as I Knew Him*, and one or two short notices of late Wagnerian literature—not as wide as a church-door, nor as deep as a well; it is enough, were the methods

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of the *Spectator* carried along on similar lines, to bury whatever reputation for fair play—and that is considerable—and intelligent and broad insight into the world's ways—which is much less considerable—it possesses. Indeed, the *Spectator* is an excellent example of that style of journalism which, somewhat removed from the more vulgar stress of political life, tempers its views with the philosophic calm of religion. But just as the positive virtue of patriotism, at the boundary of national life, in getting merged into a wider universality, becomes a positive vice, so the dear *Spectator*, with one motherly—for it is a female spectator—eye on the dangers which threaten the Church of England from an excess of form and ritualism, and the other motherly eye on the equal, if antipodal, dangers to which it is subjected by a broad and enlightened socialistic policy, loses her little balancing stock of virtue which has so far served to keep her upright, when the Church ceases to form the boundary of her virtue. Were it possible to fix once for all the policy of the Church, and were she not, like all other human institutions, pliant, whose apparent sheet-anchors of unity are sheer abstractions, any

one's property that likes to pick them up, then when a wider basis had been reached in the near future, the Church would appear the figment Jowett made all Catholic Churches out to be and in the main a huge political and financial Tammany, where those people who undertake to serve her best get the best appointments, the greatest flattery, and are thus led to assume the *ne plus ultra* of unctuous rectitude, for which sublime attainment the blood of the whole country has to be sucked. Since, then, of all men who have adorned this world, Wagner possessed most this wide-reaching generous soul, which never takes any conglomeration of egoism at its own valuation as a concrete factor in morals, so it might occur to the *Spectator* that Wagner's efforts to clear up the confusion of thought with regard to Christianity, by showing the relation Art holds to religion, are not to be dismissed by curtly saying that he amused himself with spinning philosophy when not composing operas. I will return to this monstrous way of evading a sincere man, to smugly assume that one's own church keeps the Christian doctrine intact. When Präger published, or rather had published, with embellishments,

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after his death, his book *Wagner as I Knew Him*, very few people saw in it more than a readable, loosely strung collection of tributes to the lofty aims and character of Wagner, with a Präger to set him right on a few harmless aberrations. As Präger said, Wagner's was a nature high above all mean and petty tricks. Two gentlemen with a wide knowledge of Wagner saw many things in this book, however, which were, to say the least of it, irrelevant and inconsistent with both outer facts and Präger's own statements, and they brought home to one source or another the gravest charges of misrepresentation and literary fraud ; so much so, indeed, that the editor of the *Musical Standard*, who published all the pros. and cons. of the case, summed up in the number of June 2, 1894, as follows. It

"hardly knows what to say of an author who translates German letters into English, and then, when a German translation of his is required, re-translates these English versions of the letters into German, instead of giving the original German letters."

And

"While brushing aside any suggestion that Ferdinand Präger's account of Wagner was actuated at all

by malice, and while paying a tribute to the good work which Präger did in spreading a knowledge of Wagner's music in London, we reluctantly have had to come to the conclusion that *Wagner as I Knew Him* is so full of inaccuracies in every respect that in the interest of the master himself it should be withdrawn at once from circulation."

The German publishers, Messrs. Breitkopf & Härtel, announced to the *Bayreuther Blätter* their intention of withdrawing the book as soon as they had been convinced of the outcome of the results of the terribly exhausting labours to which Mr. Ashton Ellis and Mr. Houston Stewart Chamberlain were subjected in their exposure of the facts. And what was our dear *Spectator's* contribution to the matter. Its critic, overlooking all the friendly testimony of a patterer to Wagner's good character, delivered himself of the following on July 9, 1892 :—

"Mr. Präger is the first person who, without a shade of malice, has given us a perfectly unvarnished picture of the man as he lived and moved among his fellow-creatures."

After instancing Wagner's ingratitude, which makes his wife Minna, his friend Roeckel, his patrons Schlesinger and Meyerbeer, the "victims of the



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Juggernaut car of his insatiable egotism," and his want of impressionability when he saw the Jews baited by the Leipsig populace, he caps this ghastly and most veracious (!) catalogue of crime with

"When we add to these traits a lack of physical courage, except of a histrionic order—as a boy he was combative without being pugilistic—an insatiable love of luxury and wealth—unlimited means" [yes, dear *Spectator*, for every one] "was the dream of his life—a want of sympathy for children, and a disinclination to recognise the undistinguished friends of his earlier and struggling days, we have enough how it came about that he was one of the best abused, as he was certainly one of the best abusing, men of the century. No genius of the first rank that we recall, unless it be Napoleon, had so large an admixture of clay in his composition as the creator of *Parsifal*."

Good old *Spectator*! And yet, while Napoleon was banished to St. Helena, Wagner was invited to Bayreuth. Poor old *Spectator*! That must have been delightful reading to the people who were awaiting the final burst-up of Wagnerian enthusiasm. The *Spectator* closed with the triumphal appeal that those who were not inclined to put Wagner's true character to the test should put

Präger's book on the index. What a home-thrust ! Spiteful old *Spectator* ! Her offended dignity took a long rest after this Christian onslaught. She did not feel it incumbent, in the ethereal atmosphere of virtue which shuts the patrician Church of England conscience from the vulgar outer world, to notice the fate which befell Präger's book. Her ebullient interest calmed down ; she yawned in her silent indifference to the truth. We often hear slighting remarks about the non-conformist conscience. There is still some grain of tribute in the mere implication, for we know of no smoke without fire. To have a conscience at all, even if it is only another's, redeemed from a pawnshop, is still something. The fairest-minded unbeliever in the assumed lofty mission of the Church of England would be slow to attribute to that institution the possession of even a stolen pawnbroker's ticket for the commodity, if the *Spectator's* method of treating Wagner made out the sum of its morals. But lately the *Spectator* has kindly condescended to notice—they are not reviews any more—some books on Wagner. Mr. Chamberlain in his book, which has endeavoured, with some effect they say, to set Wagner as a whole man

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before the public, gets this set-back for his lucid and clear labours :

“ Luckily for mankind, Wagner had lucid intervals, when he devoted his Titanic energy to the production of operas.”

This is just your present-day anti-Wagnerianism in its nutshell. Arguments do not belong to the *Spectator's* methods when she, poor old lady, meets her opponent—truly her best friend, if she only knew it—face to face. With M. Lavignac's book, *The Music Dramas of Richard Wagner*, translated by Ethel Singleton,\* being an English version of the successful *Le Voyage Artistique à Bayreuth*, our dear old friend gets another opportunity of showing how to make short shrift with heretics. She not only praises the book, but actually beams with satisfaction. For what? For some positive matter of interest? Not a bit. Here is her expression of gratitude :

“ Our thanks are also due to M. Lavignac ” [riddle-de-riddle-de-ree ; can you now tell me what this may be?] “ for not having wearied us ” [do you detect the yawn, in spite of the attempt to keep up the beaming smile?] “ with the philosophical theories Wagner amused himself by

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spinning when he was not seriously occupied with composition. The ordinary critic has given us too much of them, and the present volume gains greatly by their being ignored." (August 6, 1898.)

Poor old thing, I do pity you. Not at present but when you come to see what a power Wagner is, just exactly for that Christianity which you "amuse" yourself with fancying is fostered by your Church ; then—if you are at heart Christian, which is most highly probable and willingly granted—you will recognise just what we do now in Wagner. But this slow, creeping adaptation of means to ends, making these vanishing means ends in themselves ; the gradual setting to right of your house only when danger threatens ; the stealing of Wagner's and such men's views without acknowledgment, to save the Church from the dangers which an ever - increasing intellectual condition of the people serves to accentuate—dangers calling for that diplomatic and accommodating surrender of points held formerly with grim tenacity, and puffed out with indignant demonstrations of virtue ; these "farces" which are only recognised as "farces" to the narrow mind at given times under given

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conditions, when severe pressure has already been exercised;—all of these shall serve to cover up your salutary march towards Wagner as a “peace with honour.” But to whom the honour? If you could only see and acknowledge it! To whom the disgrace? What a miserable satisfaction this baiting of the world’s great men must give the orthodox! But with us, bless you, who prefer to bait those who take advantage of their social position to bait the great; why, it makes us laugh. We buy very few so-called comic papers. *We*, *WE*—but then, we are not Galfords, Earls of Tweenwayes.

As we now bound on to the *Fortnightly*, we utter (with a small variation) Klingsor’s words: “Den gefährlichsten gilt ’s heut zu bestehen, ihn schützt der *Philosophieschild*.”

Philosophy is to the arguer what the infinite resources of legal forms are to the lawyer. Klingsor was wise. He employed no lawyer to carry on his case. Nor did he fear the shield of philosophy. He feared the shield of folly, with no intervening lawyer to turn its effectiveness into wisdom. So for heaven’s sake let us keep to our folly as sheet-anchor, and only utilise

the philosophy of the "wise"—so wise—to pour it down their own throats, and then ask them how they like it, when it is given them to swallow. Could we only do so with the lawyer—could we only sufficiently master his form so that he would get as much as he gives—but that is a hopeless outlook. Best, after all, it is to laugh at the whole gigantic delusion and fraud which, possessing men's minds, leads them to think they breathe fresh air in that atmosphere which, choking their better nature, is good for their evil—that atmosphere of "form," "ritualism," "red tape," etc., etc. The *Fortnightly's* record in the case *re* Wagner and Wagnerianism is much prejudiced by the re-publication — not entirely, however ; perhaps the final portion was too much for even a philosophical English editor—of that squib of Nietzsche's, called *The Case of Wagner*. That re-publication was a pity for the *Fortnightly*. It was a pity for Nietzsche. It was a pity for those who, in translating Nietzsche, began with those final works, when, on the verge of lunacy, after a terrible life of pain and suffering, borne with heroic fortitude, the fine style, the profound common-sense, of the earlier writings had given

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place to an aphoristic style, advancing a sophistically argued, infatuated belief in man's sheer physical powers.

Every one has by this time heard how Nietzsche was once an enthusiastic follower of Wagner; how he wrote the finest and acutest essay, surcharged, however, with praise, on Wagner; how he became an intimate friend of the household; how he seceded, apparently at the height of his friendship, when he detected Christianity in both Schopenhauer and Wagner; how he indulged in incoherent and disconnected denunciation; and how his reason fled for ever.

He wrote, doubtless, other things than that which was contained in the eleventh volume of his collected writings; but that did not concern his translators till later; and I should have enjoyed seeing in the staid columns of the *Fortnightly* the splendid essay—the truly, for some people, *Untimely Reflection*—called *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Now, whether the translators of Nietzsche were animated with the general desire to “down” Wagner at any cost by this inverted policy of translation, I do not know. More likely it was the general spirit of

antipathy to Christianity. Nietzsche is the most spirited and honest supporter of this vogue. Philosophy he has none. But as regards the re-publication of *The Case of Wagner* in the *Fortnightly*, there can be hardly any question as to its object. Wagner has to be "downed"; that is the fixed idea, and the *Fortnightly* must render assistance.

If any doubt existed at all, it would be set at rest by the publication, in the June number of the *Fortnightly*, 1898, of an article entitled "Wagner's *Ring* and its Philosophy," by Mr. Ernest Newman. This was just prior to the performances of the Trilogy, which took place during the opera season at Covent Garden. These performances would help the Wagnerian case. It was thus, from the anti-Wagnerian point of view, a most "timely reflection." Whether it was equally as logical and reasonable as timely, we shall see presently. In it Wagner and his "parrot-like" admirers were held up to ridicule and contempt before a galaxy of intellectually superior Admirable Crichtons. Since this was a signed article, we may leave aside the share the magazine had in its publication, and



concentrate our attention on the author and his method.

Mr. Newman had been already known as a Wagnerian critic in the now defunct *Musician* of 1897. There he—specially in dealing with Wagner's æsthetic views—gave hopes that he could be seriously argued with. Still, there were not wanting signs of that petulance so pervading the *Fortnightly* article, which brings along with it its own denial of the right to serious answer.\*

What I want now to draw special attention to is just this deficiency. For England, Mr. Newman is the first individual to enter the field as critical discursive opponent of Wagner on the philosophical and æsthetic lines of that great man's labours. Here there is no longer any doubt of Wagner's musical ability or melodic capacity. Indeed, that is so readily granted that music reassumes the

\* Mr. Newman is not treated here as the author of a book which appeared ten months after the *Fortnightly* article. On other fields than social "views" the sincere critical attitude of the *Study of Wagner* reduces the petulance here treated of to a minimum. Allowing that it would be unfair to treat Mr. Newman's book without due appreciation of his sincerity, the case is not altered when the general subject of anti-Wagnerianism is considered as is done here. All of this was written long before I knew that a 400-page book was to be published.

very relation to the Drama which Wagner's earlier writings proved to be a degradation for music, an elevation for the singer, and a source of weakness for the special drama under consideration. If Wagner is only the musician influencing poetic form, which Mr. Newman would make him out to be, then music as a dramatic factor is denied its character of evolution from mere form to spirit. This every one must know who has read the *Art-work of the Future*, and *Opera and Drama*. As far as actual discussion has gone with Mr. Newman, we find already in the *Musician* symptoms of that rumbling and growling which are harbingers and stormy petrels of the method animating the spirit of the anti-Wagnerian. Mr. Newman is our preliminary light-weight, who has come forward to support the orthodox case. What I wish to impress on people is, how the unreasonableness of this spirit; how its *a priori* assumption of its own reasonableness; how its ingrained antipathy, blinding all desire for fair treatment;—infect anti-Wagnerianism to an extent which makes it fail of its purpose. If I can succeed in any measure, however slight, in convincing the reading public of this fatal *a priori* unreasonable-

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ness and ingrained antipathy which blinds all desire for fair treatment, then I am also sure that, to some extent, in a corresponding ratio, the future output of anti-Wagnerian literature will be driven back on such little reason as it can command—not sheer abuse ; and its style will convince those who study it that it finally acknowledges meeting in Wagner at any rate (whatever it thinks of his admirers) an opponent worthy of respectful treatment. At present it thinks it can “down” him by ridicule and mere assumption of superiority. It is lamentably wrong ; and its philosophy will never be worth the paper it is written on if it does not learn this—and furthermore that just this very style, this trivial self-satisfaction, this levity and contempt for Wagner as a thinker, carries along with it its own condemnation of any critical value. To argue seriously with the present anti-Wagnerian spirit, as represented by Mr. Newman, is an impossibility. It is doited with the infatuation, as is the case with all conservatism, of its assumed superiority.

We must now see if the above assertions are capable of proof ; for whatever we do, it is necessary to avoid copying anti-Wagnerians in

mere abuse and accusations. Personally, I would like to have elaborately answered Mr. Newman's articles in the *Musician*, but I recognised the hopelessness of the task. I could never succeed in grasping his point. All that one can get out of the essay *Wagner's Theory of Music, Poetry, etc.*, is a negative criticism, at the end throwing up even the sponge of negativeness under the bottomless "if" of psychology which neither I nor any one else could fathom. Mr. Newman, in undertaking to prove that Wagner's celebrated formula, "The error in the art-genre of opera consists herein: that a Means of Expression (music) has been made the End, while the End of Expression (the Drama) has been made a Means," is "altogether erroneous," only leads himself into a hopeless dilemma, out of which Wagner alone can possibly emerge triumphant, in spite of all exertions to prove the contrary. It is worth looking into. Coming to this presently, I may say first that assuredly, to the Wagnerian, expression is rooted in action; and, drama being action, expression is rooted in drama. Therefore if music expresses anything at all; if it, in any sense, is more than "pure tonal form and colour, untroubled

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by any suggestions from the realms of poetry and prose" (why not say drama or action?);—then, with drama or action in the background, both expression and music in the Art-work have to follow that, in order to convey the poetic idea of the drama to the audience. Drama, Mr. Newman will surely admit, has a poetic idea. The way Mr. Newman would get Wagner into the wrong, and provide himself with a case, is to be effected by saying that, with Wagner and his musical theory, the word "drama" receives a new signification, which other people did not attach to it. This opposing other people, or "the rest," in a collective concretion, to Wagner, is a most happy thought of Mr. Newman's. Only, unfortunately, when we come to look into the matter, "the rest" is a hopelessly divided faction, and not a concrete opposition at all. But having given us this argument as his most effective reproach, Mr. Newman then substitutes his words "poetry" and "verse" for Wagner's word "drama," and carries on his argument as if no distinction had to be made between these words. All along we feel that he thinks he has somewhere in reserve real proof for the assumption that a concrete standard exists, to which it was

Wagner's duty to conform, or else his abnormal mind and fancy would be sufficient to doom him to easy refutation. Of course, this assumption of a standard never receives proof, for the good reason that there is none. There never was, and never will be, a standard before which to try the work of a genius. Every dramatist is adding to our conception of the perfect drama. Otherwise we have no conception of a genus drama as Art-work. Apart from the Art-work, in the midst of life and action, where the idea of drama has its root, drama is active relationship in life, and is not first of all played on a stage, but provided already in all the world on the stage of life. We can get a nearer view of Mr. Newman's dilemma if we observe the manner in which he plays hide-and-seek with object and subject, which, in view of his article in the *Fortnightly*, where a superior philosophy is paraded, it is necessary to notice here. To me, as only a dull Wagnerian, it is inconceivable how a man can expect to be clear if he jumbles up object and subject at sweet will. Of course, every one knows, who really thinks at all, that the phenomenon before us is *in itself* neither object nor subject, but only at a *given time* either one

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or the other; and that *given time* is even determined by something in ourselves—*i.e.* the mind considering the phenomenon. Now, if a man is to hop about in one and the same sentence, or in consecutive sentences, without any appreciation of the obligation which the commonest rule of philosophy demands from him, then no one can possibly know what he means. One and the same phenomenon is either object *or* subject, but not at the same time as the mind is considering the phenomenon, one *and* the other. So if any change is effected by the considering mind which turns the same phenomenon from object into subject, it must be done with that conscious knowledge which carries the reader along with the writer. If not, Heaven alone knows what a writer may not be driving at!—while the reader is helplessly looking for some definite thought.

I will now give an instance of this from the essay in the *Musician*. Mr. Newman quotes Berlioz to show that Gluck's idea of expression as the sole aim of dramatic music is insufficient, because music has also to be considered as *sensuous pleasure*. Thus, he adds, Berlioz has "struck at the heart of the fallacy of the Wagnerian theory," but not "at

the bulk of the practice." This is very nice. Let us watch the result. Mere sensuous pleasure, then, in Wagner's operas, as in those of every one else, looms large, in spite of Wagner's theory, which *we are to suppose (from Mr. Newman) denies sensuous pleasure to music per se*. I should like to know where Wagner ever speaks of anything existing *per se*. Wagner first of all asserts that the objective aim—that is, the unconscious purpose of music—is Expression. In short, that is its *conditio sine qua non*. If, now, a person comes in with talk about "form," then Wagner has nothing, *per se*, to say for or against it. In his *Beethoven* he relegates it to its place. Form is also a *sine qua non* of music, as it is of matter before we could even speak of matter. Here, then, so far, we keep to this objective fact, which no talk of form, *per se*, or of sensuous pleasure, *per se*, in any wise obviates. Music *is* expression. But, now, if we are going to hop off this *sine qua non* into the subjective question of sensuous pleasure, nothing is injured. We only view the same phenomenon from the subjective side. It involves no refutation of the objective view. Sensuous pleasure is just as necessary to music for us as form was necessary



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to it for itself. Both together make up the whole expression. On page 120 of *Opera and Drama*, Wagner says :

“The true Art-work can only be engendered by an advance from imagination to actuality—*i.e.* physicality (*Sinnlichkeit*),”

which is the German word for sensuousness. And so, when Mr. Newman begins Part V. of his essay with the words—

“From all that has gone before there arises the one conclusion that Wagner went hopelessly astray in omitting to notice the great part played in opera by the mere sensuous quality of the tone”—

he uses the word tone (objective) and the word sensuous (subjective) as if they were destructive to Wagner, played off one against the other, while they are only complementary. As to the last clause of this sentence :

“and by the musical imagination *per se*, apart from poetry”—\*

I can say nothing. Musical imagination as it

\* *Per se* there is no imagination, musical or otherwise.

leaves the poetic form, assumes the rhythmic. Verse has to do with the rhythm ; and a prevailing rhythm of rhymed, or measured, literary poetry hampers and destroys the expression demanded by dramatic music. That is included in Wagner's argument, whatever else there is.

Instead, then, of arguing Mr. Newman down the length of his article, I translated an excellent article from the German on Wagner's *Æsthetics*, being fully convinced that, for the readers of the *Musician*, Mr. Newman's efforts would be much better met by a constructive rendering of the question than by exposing his errors. In the meantime, the *Musician* died, and I now take the opportunity in this volume of publishing the German article in question. People may, then, read the article side by side who can get the *Musician*, and judge for themselves which of the two elucidates Wagner the better.\* And now to expose Mr. Newman's dilemma. He ends his article by asserting that Wagner is only *primus inter pares*: just an opera-composer, "like the rest," only the greatest. As to his and

\* Wagner can never be successfully criticised unless his work is regarded in its entirety.

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the others' treatment of poetry, the difference is this—that "whereas another composer *musicalises* (if I may coin the word) the verse after it is written, Wagner treats it in this way before it is written." \* Thus Wagner and Rossini, who is one among "the rest," rub shoulders. What I want to know, then, is this: What is the use of making out that Wagner was wrong in the theory of his famous formula, as quoted above? How can Mr. Newman make that out to be "entirely erroneous" without Wagner differing in kind, and not in degree, from "the rest"? Will not Rossini and "the rest" need to take over Wagner's error if Mr. Newman is going to make common property of both Wagner's and "the rest's" virtues? If not, then, since Mr. Newman insists on Wagner's error, that insistence is sufficient to make Wagner differ in kind; and just at that error begins the differentiation Wagner insisted on in his formula. So Mr. Newman can take his choice. He can scarcely expect to keep both, and at his sweet will either make an

\* Yes; the verse, but not the poetry. Just because "the rest" musicalise the verse after it is written, their music is hampered, and the demands of development denied the opera-composer.

abnormality of Wagner, or a normality like "the rest." Wagner is not to be demonstrated abnormal, and then pitchforked back among the others, with only the difference that he musicalised verse before it was written, while the others did it after. There is something more in drama than setting verse to music, or music to verse. Either Wagner is not an opera-composer like the rest, and his error is his own, or else he is an opera-composer like the rest, in which case Mr. Newman's argument about Wagner's abnormality falls to the ground. They must all have acted on Wagner's formula, or none of them—including Wagner. Did Wagner act on his own formula? Mr. Newman says, in the bulk, not. But in changing Wagner's arguments on drama to arguments on "poetry" and "verse," he vitiates the case.\*

Evidently Mr. Newman is in a hopeless quandary in his attempt to "down" Wagner. The very stone the builder rejected he will have to make the head of the corner if Wagner is like the rest. Mr. Newman had better stick to Wagner's abnormality,

\* To talk about Wagner musicalising anything but verse, because his drama contains verse, is just as erroneous as to talk—as Mr. Newman frequently does—about Wagner *thinking* in music. He certainly *felt* in music.

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and tell us, as we know quite well, that when we take that into account, there is nothing wrong about his theory. But it is not permissible to prove Wagner erroneous without giving Wagner the well-earned blame of his error. To give him the blame, and then only label him with the rest, is just to take all the sting out of one's own reproach. We want Wagner's "error" so badly that Mr. Newman must keep to it.

After this ineffective attempt, it is small wonder that Mr. Newman's attitude in the *Fortnightly* grows into abuse. From it no coherent argument is to be got; but in the *Musician* there was a leading article, entitled, "On Music and Musical Criticism," which gives some idea of a line on which Mr. Newman might proceed constructively. It opposes the quotation from Mr. Moulton (see page 12), namely, that the whole history of criticism, speaking broadly—Mr. Moulton evidently knows quite well that there are exceptions to every rule—has been a triumph of authors over critics. Mr. Newman gets hold of a somewhat similar quotation from Mr. W. H. Hadow's *Studies in Modern Music*:

"Monteverde, Gluck, Wagner, are heroes now, for

the very reason which made them criminals to the conservatism of their day. And in all cases it was the untutored public that accepted the innovation, while academic pedantry stood aloof and denounced the pioneer as traitor to his cause."

Now, Mr. Hadow undoubtedly offers an opportunity to the hair-splitter by his absolute "in all cases," and Mr. Newman take advantage of it. I should like to know what he would say to Mr. Moulton's version. To Mr. Hadow he answers: "I can imagine nothing more uncritical than this." And I can imagine nothing more uncritical than the contrary. All the history of the world goes to prove that a battle takes place between the spirit and the letter, and academic pedantry everlastingly clings to the letter and form. Liberals have always detested this paltry, iniquitous trifling with the heart of a subject, while conservatism hugs it in every branch of life. That hugging forms conservatism root and branch.

Before entering on the *Fortnightly* article, then, I beg to call the reader's attention to this fact: that nowhere, throughout Mr. Newman's article, does he divulge a hint as to the authoritative opponent to Wagner from whom a constructive

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theory can be drawn. He never seems to think one necessary. Now, we Wagnerians have Wagner, at any rate. That is something positive ; and no matter however bad or common, according to an ideal theory, yet it is positive fact, and that is better than nothing at all. There is a good story of a duchess-widow, or dowager duchess, as I believe one must call her, who went down to a cottage where there lived the humble wife of an engine-driver, who was engaged on the night express. This fact kept the husband away from the wife so much that the dowager duchess pitied her for her bad luck. The good woman got rather nettled by the patronage, and as the duchess was retiring, in her lovely sables, etc., she called after her : "Well, a live engine-driver is better than a dead duke." So think we too. Probably Mr. Newman has a duke in philosophy to disclose—maybe the Duke of Argyll—when fairly driven to bay. Maybe the duchess consoled herself by getting married again.

But in any case we have our Wagner, and are proud of the fact. If Mr. Newman ever produces his authority, we shall find that he mostly agrees with Wagner, as I mean later to prove from

detached authors, since no single authority is forthcoming. That is to say, for every assertion of Wagner I can produce corroborative evidence which comes from perfectly independent sources. This is also necessary, since Mr. Newman will insist that Wagnerians are only parrot-like imitators of Wagner. Even here, however, Mr. Newman puts himself in the wrong. For had Wagner all his life through said no more than "*Pretty Poll!*" to us, and had we kept strictly to the repetition of these words, that would have been better than Mr. Newman representing him to have said "*Ugly Poll!*" Of great value is the habit of taking a writer in his own words and his own meaning.

The reader will kindly remember that all reproachful words or phrases in italics have been already employed in the *Fortnightly* article, and I adopt them only as an expedient, to test their efficacy as a monopoly. I myself consider they there betray a weakness, and beg to disassociate myself from the adoption of such a style to "down" any opponent whatever, not to mention one on as much solid footing as Richard Wagner.

The very first sentence in the *Fortnightly* betrays the fatuous method of the anti-Wagnerian.



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He is possessed of such a subtle, but blind, wit, that he infuses already into his preliminary remark a dose of that terrible irony which is calculated to be bitterness to the *thorough-going panegyrist*, and sweetness to the thorough-going detractor. I do not think that many students of Wagnerian literature will have forgotten Mr. Rowbotham's performance of ten years ago in the *Nineteenth Century*. He determined to be nothing if not drastic. The age had already become happily purified of Wagnerian enthusiasm; and Mr. Rowbotham was relieved of more than an antiquarian survey of an almost forgotten instance of curious human gullibility. However, it had been a passing event of its time so genuinely comical that it was excused the momentary raking up out of its cold ashes. And now, after ten years, England, so Mr. Newman tells us, will *soon* have its Wagner *fever*—note the word “fever,” and think of the lagging situation and want of commercial enterprise so characteristic of England—“just as Germany and France have *had* theirs.” No wonder, then, that for the time the *fanatic* admirer—note, he is fanatic “whose capacity for feeling musical delight is—to put it mildly—considerably

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in excess of his capacity to think"—gets his opportunity. Undoubtedly; and what is more, his capacity for feeling dramatic delight is not only in excess, but, in priority of time, precedes his capacity to think.\* There is nothing to be ashamed of in the admission; and it must need a brain of very *mediocre capacity*, but excessive vanity, to think that this admission in any way lets the anti-Wagnerian in before the Wagnerian, with a superior capacity to think. However, possessed of this vanity, Mr. Newman sails along in complete satisfaction, determined not to give himself a chance of considering his own position. Had England only been abreast of the situation, the "*unlimited absurdity*" of the *fanatic admirer* would have been "killed by laughter almost at the outset." "No subject could be found more inviting to the satirist than the literature of the thorough-going Wagner panegyrists." And the philosophical problem which Wagner thought he was expressing in the *Ring* is fated to be corrected [at Mr. Newman's

\* Mr. Newman tries to push Wagner's thought into his dramas, to the exclusion of his artistic intuition. Of course he cannot do so really.

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hands(?)] with irony because the "Wagnerian controversy in England has not yet reached the stage of wholesome laughter." Why not have a little *wholesome laughter* to start with? Let us all join. Bless you, we have no sort of objection. Let us laugh all together.

"When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,  
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;  
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,  
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

\* \* \* \* \*

"When the painted birds laugh in the shade;  
When our table with cherries and nuts is spread;—  
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,  
To sing the sweet chorus of 'Ha, ha, he!'"

So all together: "Ha, ha, he!"

Now, after the mirth has subsided on one side, if not on both, let us just note to whom the subsequent irony falls due by observing the process by means of which Mr. Newman is going to apply that "wholesome corrective of ironic laughter" whereby the thorough-going Wagnerian is no longer "to flourish apace in musical literature." Note, to start with, the suppression of the word "dramatic" for "musical." First of all, then, we

will see how often Mr. Newman's assertions agree with those of Wagner.

(1) "Nothing was more characteristic of Wagner than his passion for holding up his own peculiar and *à priori* ideas as laws of life for others, in the most perfect unconsciousness that his ideas were born of an organism, not only abnormal in many ways, but radically incapable of plain objective thinking."

Well, now, as to holding up one's own peculiar and *à priori* ideas with any purpose in view at all, I, for the life of me, cannot *à priori* see the iniquity of it; and furthermore, considering it is a practice in vogue arising from the very nature of individuality, to select Wagner as a special instance of its folly is unjust. The universality of the vogue dissolves all ideas of its rightness or of its wrongness *à priori*. It is to be regarded as a fact of existence, and can be found in the works of men like Sir Isaac Newton, Darwin, Spencer, and scientific and practical thinkers in general. Some other, so far unmentioned, factor is needed before this expression of individuality can be looked at as reprehensible. As to the *perfect unconsciousness*, Mr. Newman had better read the Wagner-Liszt correspondence, and then from these

letters, numbers of them, he will see what support he gleans for this accusation. In fact, one is inclined to play with Mr. Newman a bit, much in the same way as the Lord did with Abraham on the question of the destruction of Sodom, but in inverse ratio. Peradventure there be one case in which I could give evidence that Wagner was extremely conscious of his abnormality, would that satisfy Mr. Newman? I am strongly of opinion the result would be equally favourable for me if Mr. Newman, not being contented with one instance, demanded fifty. Wagner's consciousness in this respect can be proved so easily that it forms the very backbone of that argument which would elevate it into objective proof of Wagner's inartistic nature. Some people will continue to insist that before all Wagner was just a thinker, and not an artist. But I am under no obligations to multiply instances till I know how many are enough for Mr. Newman. As to his radical incapacity for plain objective thinking, that would be better than a capacity to think such *objects* about Wagner as we shall find Mr. Newman doing. Thinking, mostly, is a subjective operation, and does not manufacture

objects ; or perhaps, indeed, it makes of us sad *objects*.

(2) "Scarcely another man could have been found in Europe to advocate so earnestly, with such sincere conviction, a return to the social and artistic ideals of the Greeks. That vain dream, held to by Wagner with extraordinary tenacity, is typical of the unreal, fantastic cloudland in which the great musician lived."

Again, note the word "musician," and keep this stored up in your memory. How can a musician, of all men, live in cloudland? Reality is their hunting ground. Well, then, if this *vain dream* was not only never held to at all, but repudiated in clear language, and denied by the drift of Wagner's meaning, the typical *cloudland* disappears. But how are we to prove that Mr. Newman is wrong? Wagnerians have had so far almost as easy a task in defending Wagner from the charges laid to him, ranging from gross immorality to ingratitude, as the anti-Wagnerians had in spreading them abroad. Not quite so easy, of course ; but where labour was expended, the result has been so satisfactory that the labour could be looked back on with pleasure. Falsehood always gets the start, and we must exert ourselves to

catch it up. But what are we to do in this case? The indictment is so terrible that it should only be whispered around with bated breath. Fancy our pure age trying to return to that of the Greeks, under Wagner's guidance! Alas! alas! Like Mime, we are "vernagelt nun ganz." Do you remember that novel of Artemus Ward's, contained among the collective works in one volume? The plot and treatment are much on a scale with Wagner's *Ring*. That is to say, where Ward's plot extends over twenty-five years, Wagner's composition took a similar period. The space occupied by A. Ward is about five lines; you can read it in three and a half seconds. Wagner takes up fifteen hours of performance, and his plot is projected right and left into indefinite realms of time and space. Both, however, are dramatic. A. Ward's title might run thus, in which case the title would be as long as the novel: "The History of the Thought of a Prisoner who eventually escaped from the Dire Terrors of a Twenty-Five Years' Imprisonment in a Loathsome Dungeon. At the end of that period of suspense a thought struck the unfortunate. It was a heavy blow, the mere thought itself, but it left him with sufficient

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strength to put it into execution. *He opened the window and got out.*

But we—what are we to do, cribbed and confined as we are, groaning under a sense of the injustice and misrepresentation contained in Mr. Newman's indictment? Oh for a ray of sunshine to cleave the darkness! That now, after successful clearing of Wagner's memory from all sorts of horrible charges, we should be thus pulled up short by this fearful slur on his character, is more than Wagnerian human flesh and blood can bear. Oh! oh! oh! as Lady Macbeth has it when she mistrusts all the perfumes of Arabia to sweeten her little hand. Could we only get Kundry to rush to Arabia for some balsam! But stay! Like a dart comes to me the inspiration. Why not consult Wagner's *Prose Works*? Here, now that I think of it, we have Mr. Ashton Ellis' translation, which in this very *Fortnightly* article Mr. Newman, of all men, recommends as "extremely careful and conscientious." How can he know that? One soon finds that it is not even necessary to read Wagner's essays through to get what we want. Mr. Ellis has provided us with a summary. So we timidly venture—not being sure whether we



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do not provoke the ironical laughter of the anti-Wagnerian, and fearing to submit ourselves to ridicule, since the desired stage of *wholesome laughter* has not yet been reached—to take in our hands (I hope the beloved reader will not object to an occasional “our” and “we,” for I feel convinced I have one or two with me, even one or two anti-Wagnerians, if not of too thoroughbred a type, not too West-End altogether)—I said, to take into our hands vol. i. of the English translation of Wagner's *Prose Works*, and cast the eye down the summary. There it is, almost at once! Between pages 53 and 55 we are to find :

“not slavish restoration of sham Greek art.”

Now turning back to see Wagner's own words on page 54 we read :

“We have quite other work to do than to tinker at the resuscitation of old Greece.”

And again :

“No, we do not wish to revert to Greekdom ; for what the Greeks knew not, and, knowing not, came by their downfall : that know *we*.”

I am personally bound to apologise to all Wagnerians who perchance may refuse to accept

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this method of refuting Mr. Newman's charge. I can only assure them that they are not bound by me. I take on myself the whole responsibility of the unusual procedure, and I am furthermore willing to bear all the ironical laughter the anti-Wagnerian faction can command.

I must still add that this evidence I have offered is, even to me, far from conclusive. A bad man who adds diplomacy to his badness, a Mime on top of an Alberich, has infinite resources, in the shape of bluff, by which to work his way towards his detestable ends, and Wagner may possibly have been just too 'cute for us all, and thus dragged this verbal testimony, like a red herring, across the line of the real debased aim of his thought, knowing well enough that that aim was too palpably infamous to expose in its shameless nakedness before the morally hallowed society which he unscrupulously laboured to undermine. So I must add as an assurance for my readers—those only, however, who are open to be assured—that a very slight knowledge of the difference Wagner drew between the Grecian and Romantic ideals, pervading all his writings, is sufficient to conclusively dispel Mr. Newman's

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assertion. As it is certainly not obligatory on me to expound in this book, Wagner's meaning, to prove that he is right, but only so much as shall prove that at least anti-Wagnerians are wrong, and thus reduce the whole question to that of fair discussion, in refuting these assertions I have fulfilled all that can be demanded of me. But in the presence of the anti-Wagnerian, in such a world as this, where morality is a mere relative matter, a Wagnerian can always afford to be generous, and so I will append to this essay a short vertical summary of Wagner's thought, which may serve—I answer for no other Wagnerian, but I trust in many—as prolegomena to all future Wagnerian criticism of his prose. Then any doubts which still cling to the supposition that Wagner was engaged in the *vain dream* Mr. Newman attributes to him will be set at rest once for all, let us hope; but alas for human hopes! We are all Cassandras, it is to be feared. In the meantime, we may pass on to No. 3.

This No. 3 involves a nice little point in philosophy, on which Mr. Newman, when he is in the constructive humour, may assist in

enlightening us. Twice Mr. Newman asserts that Wagner regarded gold or money as the root of evil. He says :

“In the famous *Vaterlandsverein* speech of 1848, misinspired no doubt by some of the economists of the time, whom he had read and only half understood” [of course, Mr. Newman, only half ; Wagner could do no more, not even two-thirds !], “he fulminated against the evil wrought among men by gold.”

And again :

“To say that the root of all our social misery is money . . . is to place oneself almost outside the pale of serious discussion.”

And now, if Wagner did not say it, then he remains still within the pale, while we may wonder how Mr. Newman enjoys his self-inflicted excommunication from serious discussion. So I, am here concerned alone with the charge that Wagner attributed man's social disgrace to gold. I deny it flatly ; but in order to elucidate the point, it is now necessary to understand the apparently small, but very significant, philosophical question involved. Once more I must say no person, no matter over what superficial area his philosophical studies have been spread, can ever

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become clear to himself or to others, unless he has learnt to avoid the confusion which results from mixing up "object" and "subject." If you place two men together, intending to set them a-marching towards one and the same goal, they must both exactly face that goal and walk in parallel lines. To the eye the smallest deflection from parallelism may not be noticeable before starting; but that will result, after a walk of fifty miles, in a very wide divergence. So with philosophical reasoning. Let us be absolutely clear that we agree on the parallelism of object and subject, and then we shall avoid attributing to the one what solely lies in the other. Thus Wagner never fulminated against the object gold or money. His wonderfully dramatic sense of justice would have been sufficient to prevent this. He knew, without any burning of the midnight oil, that all ideas of good and evil lay in and with the subject, *i.e.* in the brain of organic man, and not in the object, *i.e.* in inorganic matter. The very opening of the *Rhinegold* should serve to make every one clear on this head. The Rhine-daughters sing the praises of gold, when the light of the sun awakens its power

to beautify the surrounding scene. They bathe rapturously in the rays and delight in the power of this very gold. So alone this fact might have been enough to warn off a man from attributing such an idea to Wagner—namely, the *evil wrought among men by gold*. But such is the fatal blindness of the anti-Wagnerian to Wagner's wisdom that our latest detractor, at any cost, actually quotes a phrase from the *Fatherland Society* speech, in which Wagner has preserved instinctively this necessary and fundamental philosophical distinction; and now, in spite of this, he parades the quotation in support of his contention. Unless, then, the distinction is made between the "subject" man and the "object" gold, the former in his state of "menial bondage," wherein exactly the evil lies, then that philosophical necessity of all conditions for clear argument is left out of account. It is of no immediate consequence what the object is to which man is in bondage. The evil lies in the bondage, and not in the, so far, unexplained object. Thus Wagner, in this special speech, treats of gold, when made the object of envious desire, as an obstacle in the way of the desired development of man's lot by spiritual

and artistically stirring powers and forces. The evil *fulminated against* was not *wrought among men by gold*, but by the "menial bondage." At the start, if people are not accustomed to think, this will appear so small a matter that it will be set down as puerile quibbling. So we may also consider the unsolicited interference which would insist on pointing out the difference in the position of the men intended to march towards the same goal. If some little thought is bestowed on the matter, we shall at the start become aware of the fatal divergence, which otherwise only grows on us as pages of useless criticising, or hours of vague talking, are indulged in. A want of insight into fundamental philosophical conditions is not conducive to clear results. This is a platitude which will make Mr. Newman laugh *ironically* at its mere enunciation. I laugh *wholesomely* at its practical neglect.

Nos. 4 and 5 are so bound up together that it is best to couple them. They are imbedded in the paragraph which takes up the bulk of pages 876-7 of the *Fortnightly*. The argument indulged in here is too vague and contradictory to receive its full due in the light of misrepre-

sensation of Wagner's ideas, so it must be reverted to at a later period. But two assertions stand out. One is that Wagner "was a born preacher"; the other, after an attempt to make out a capacity in Wagner for seeing things in music which no one else can see, such as *suggestions* of "concrete" things (what, I may ask, is exactly a *suggestion* of a *concrete* thing? would a brick striking a man on the head be a suggestion of a concrete thing?), consists in this: "but to no one whatever can the music give an insight into the psychology of the characters further than the poem."\* We shall need to take Mr. Gladstone's advice here, and "interpret the adversary in the best sense his words will fairly bear": for what if the music is just part and parcel of the poem? Only, you understand, we call it drama, not poem. Wagner wrote no music to elucidate poems. Nevertheless, his music is the poetical sentiment.

\* Let any one read the footnote on page 47 of Mr. Newman's book, and see if he himself has not received an insight into character by the music. What is the use of dragging in the word "psychology"? And then read the footnote on page 252, where Mr. Newman is intent on "downing" me. There, of course, he cannot read "worthiness" into a motive. In the former case, to suit himself, he reads "nobility," and transfers that to the character Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*.



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Let us, then, return to the *born preacher*. It is certainly refreshing to learn of the existence of some point of agreement between the anti-Wagnerian and the Wagnerian, if only in the abstract. Evidently Mr. Newman does not like preachers any more than I do, but he is somewhat hasty in his attempt to fasten on Wagner the faults which stir up our mutually righteous indignation. Now, if I say I detest preachers, hating to be preached to and hating to preach, then I feel it incumbent on me to explain myself, for the sake of fairness to myself as well as to others. I take the repellent features of the *born preacher* to lie in two main points. In the first place, the preacher is like a man who tries to objectify the picture on the slide in a magic-lantern without having, or thinking it even necessary to have, a screen whereon to throw the picture. He appeals solely to the phantasy. Or, again, he is like a man who gazes with his naked eye at a discless star, and declaims on what he, according to himself, sees on that mere point of light. Another man, sceptical in the first instance, it may be on account of the mellifluous tones and vacuous expression of the

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preacher, combined with the pathetic sight of the engrossed simple women and children, or the utterly indifferent 'cute folk who together make up the audience, examines this wonderful point of light under the strongest telescope, and sees still nothing but the same discless point of light. No figures move on it, no relationship of objects is observable. There is neither love nor hate, neither secret plots nor public arrests, no opposition of forces, no Wagnerians and anti-Wagnerians, no nothink, in short, as the maidservant said when the postman brought her no letter. But the people who listen are flattered, and therein lies the attraction. Only persuade a man, woman, or child, by *banal rhetoric or airy jargon*, from a brain of the *most mediocre capacity for objective thinking*, that by belonging to this or that particular sect he is morally better than his neighbour, and you can command the quantity of your audience by your sheer gift of employing the said *windy rhetoric*. In effecting this the preacher, then, discloses the second of those repellent features—namely, a saddening incapacity to search out the moral shortcoming in himself and his sect. Now I insist, on the best evidence,

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that, of all men who ever walked in the light of the only one and true God—namely, the God of charity towards all fellow-creatures—Wagner was the last man with any practical aim in view at whose door either of these two faults can be laid. His work was all done with scrupulous attention to the perfecting of his own shortcomings, or, what is still better, with a generous and voluntary recantation of hasty judgment. If a born anything he was a born dramatist. Says Mr. Newman in one sentence :

“ But Wagner would have been offended at the suggestion that the *Ring* was to be looked upon merely as a good dramatic poem set to immortal music.”

He would not. I would prefer the “*to*” replaced by a “*with* immortal music,” and “dramatic poem” by “drama,” since every word must show how the Art-work arose in all its qualities together. Otherwise no one can take exception to Mr. Newman’s present statement of the question, except that part of it which says it would be offensive to Wagner. But the very next sentence betrays Mr. Newman’s confusion of thought, for he gets back to his “poetry” again, and thinks

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it strange Wagner should see more in a drama than a mere combination of music and poetry. I will not quote the following sentences now because I must come back to them again.

Wagner, I beg to submit, is proved by his life and work to have been a dramatist, and as such he is exactly the opposite of a preacher. As proof of this, take three born preachers of renown—say Dean Farrar, Canon Liddon, and Mr. Spurgeon. Ask for yourself if any of these men, with their own sermons still intact, had written only one *Tannhäuser*, would not people have justly regretted the want of the prosecution of what disclosed itself to be an exceptional dramatic genius in favour of preaching? Well, suppose, then, we reverse the situation, and can find so much as one sermon—I know of none—from Wagner, in face of the concrete existence of eleven dramas, from *Rienzi* to *Parsifal*, is it just to call him a *born preacher*? How many will do so? How many ever did so? What name do we keep in reserve for born preachers who glory in the fact?—while Wagner himself detested such abstract verbosity. As to No. 5, let any person turn to Wagner's exposition in

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*Opera and Drama*, and see how the poetical aim of the drama has to be brought home to the hearer by a combination of the arts, and not by any single one. Especially let the beginning of chapter v., part iii., be read. I will here only quote one sentence :

“We have only to learn, from the other side, how the complete realisation of the Poetic Aim is in turn to be affected by nothing but the highest, the most lucid vindication of the word-verse-melody through the perfected language of the orchestra, in its alliance with gesture.”

This is quite sufficient to relegate Mr. Newman's fifth charge to the same bottomless pit into which the other four have been consigned. The value of gesture so insisted on by Wagner in his theory is overlooked by Mr. Newman.\* He prefers to take a chance remark in a letter to Roeckel to corroborate his misrepresentation. As to “psychology of character,” which Mr. Newman deals with, I know nothing here in connection with music. Wagner does not employ the term. Music represents feelings : it does not analyse

\* This, of course, only alludes to the article in the *Fortnightly*.

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the why and wherefore of this man's peculiar actions.

No. 6 of Mr. Newman's misrepresentations says Wagner "preached in season and out of season upon questions of philosophy, and economics, and history, and æsthetics, and sociology." This is false, but, its proper refutation lying in the demonstration—which will follow this essay—of what Wagner intended by his Prose Writings, I will content myself here with saying that the subjects mentioned by Mr. Newman were of interest to Wagner just as they swam within the ken of their adaptability for dramatic art—just as they were, in short, fitted to be the material, the "stuff," for drama. This puts a different complexion on Wagner's writings. Let the well-disposed reader only have a little patience, and he will soon see what a simple thing it all is, given a small quantity of goodwill to study Wagner as he presents himself, and not as the critical detractor presents him.

No. 7 might have given Mr. Newman a chance of tempering the wind of his scathing ironical laughter to that poor shivering shorn lamb the *thorough-going worshipper*, for I know of a book

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on the *Ring* by one of the *fanatical admirers*, one of the *frenzied worshippers* who *attempt to handle subjects with which they are quite incompetent to deal*,\* where the charge laid to Wagner is contradicted—the charge, namely, that Wagner really had a mission to give, “not only in prose, but in a drama, the true solution of the problem of human existence. For that, finally, is what the *Ring* pretends to do.” Does it only *pretend* to do so? Not even so much as that, my dear sir; there is no pretence in Art. Now the second last sentence of the book in question says: “Wagner’s merit does not lie in having solved the problem of life, but in having stated it.” So if Wagner did really believe what Mr. Newman attributes to him, then those of his admirers who do not hold to it cannot belong to those “under the sway of Wagner’s theories,” “merely echoing, parrot-like, Wagner’s ideas.” But it is to be feared, on this No. 7 of the misrepresentations, unjust to both Wagner and his *frenzied* admirers, we need not be ashamed to echo, parrot-like, Wagner’s ideas—if Mr. Newman will insist on so

\* I beg to remind the reader that all italics are Mr. Newman’s own words in the *Fortnightly*.

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expressing himself, to his own detriment. If I personally were offered the choice of either taking as gospel truth everything Wagner uttered, or repudiating as false everything he uttered, then I would certainly choose the former, not because I agree with everything, but because I am, in my own individual right, convinced that, of all men who have the courage and honesty to repudiate the pseudo-protection of a morally worthless conception of God Almighty, I get nearest, with him, to my latent ideal of what this life of relationship ought to be. So I decline, with thanks, any past or present substitute. It is easy to believe there have been many men, as mere straight, exemplary livers, who have been better men than Wagner; the artist and his excitable temperament are bound up together. But are not sins of temperament venial? \* When we are in the humour to hearken to hints regarding morality at all, which most worthy people honestly hate, from the bottom of their hearts, I entreat, let such hints be brought to us as this beloved man, the heir of the ages, the head and front of a noble phalanx

\* In his book Mr. Newman sums up this question of character with great taste and pointedness.



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of artists, has brought them in his beautiful dramas. I am quite ready to drive away from me all moralising, if conventionalities tempt me to pose as superior to my fellow-creatures, by adhesion to the dry-rot of the mouldy past. Let that categorical imperative, as beauty—

“which, like the truth of nature  
Descended, to my outward life, supply  
Its calm”;

let it appear like the rays of the sun of genius, and maybe the most stubborn and obstinate being will take off that cloak which all the *frothy rhetoric* of the preacher only serves to make him tighten around him. But let us wipe away the tear of emotion; such is, doubtless, all *banal frothy rhetoric* to Mr. Newman; and since we must keep our eyes fixed on him for the moment, we will do our best to exchange the quality of the hilarity which *a careful reading of frenzied worshippers* on the *Ring* produces in him, for some hilarity at least equally as good; while as to the honesty of taking Wagner up as he expressed himself, we can run rings round Mr. Newman, and intend to pocket all the wagers

we have made on the result. The race has already been run : the anti-Wagnerians insist on keeping perpetually a judge in the box, who, having a large bet on the race, has awarded the stakes to the loser. The flag, however, denotes a protest, and the court of cassation of public intelligence is sitting to consider the judge's verdict. If I had any male friends who bet, I would advise them to put their very shirts on the Wagnerian horse, and if I had any female friends with a tendency in this immoral direction, I would give them the advice Georgiana tenders to her nieces at the end of the First Act of *Dandy Dick*—namely, to put their chemises on the same animal. The result never stands in question, but nevertheless we must wait and come forward when called on with our testimony. That, however, the anti-Wagnerian, "for pity's sake," urges the committee not to take into account. Clever anti-Wag. ! Evidently the Hebrew bookmaker has put you up to a trick or two.

To resume No. 7 then. The solution of *the problem of human existence*—as Mr. Newman puts the case kindly for Wagner—belongs to the world itself, not to the artistic representation as the

artist perceives it. Wagner never pretended to be more than an artist. Let any one look at the *Preface to the "Ring"* poem in vol. iii., pp. 278-9, of the English translation, and he can read :

"Just as *Faust* ultimately proposes to replace the Evangelist's 'In the beginning was the *word*' by 'In the beginning was the *deed*,' so the valid solution of an artistic problem seems feasible upon no other path than this of Deed."

Here we see Wagner speaks of the "artistic problem." Mr. Newman chooses—no, not chooses, but is compelled by some malignant spirit—to interpose "the problem of human existence," and hold this up as Wagner's. If this is not enough, then take the last letter Wagner ever wrote—namely, that one to Heinrich von Stein in vol. vi., pp. 326-7 :—

"To speak of the things of this world seems mighty easy, since all the world can talk of nothing else ; but so to show them that themselves they speak, is lent to few. And this is of the essence of *Drama*, that is no form of poetry" [let Mr. Newman specially digest this last phrase], "but the likeness of the world reflected by our silent soul. Let those gentry of 'views' go on writing their plays by the hundred, to mirror back

their views; they cannot mislead us if we seek our own way to the Drama by mastering the art, not of talking about men and things, but of letting them speak for themselves."

It now all depends whether Wagner's characters speak for themselves, or, as Mr. Newman asserts, deliver themselves of "airy jargon," and whether his operas are a "gallery peopled with dull abstractions drawn alternately from anarchistic and socialistic handbooks": not from life, as we think, but from *handbooks*; not from the popular legends of the country, but from *handbooks*; not in virtue of an innate dramatic genius, but from *handbooks*. Does Mr. Newman really believe this himself? Then the music must have been drawn from theories of harmony. Certainly the same source inspired the poem as inspired the music.

No. 8. "*If a musician must needs preach a social evangel in his operas, have we not the right to expect of him some little logical preparation for his task?*" I take this misrepresentation as the pervading sentiment of the whole article. It is the spring-board from which Mr. Newman jumps. It begs the whole question. Wagner is set forward as a musician pure and simple, in spite

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of his carefully expressed claim to his friends to be looked on primarily as a dramatist. In our day of studied politeness, as men among men, as a matter of mere justice, it is looked on as a gratuitous and wilful insult to refuse a man a first hearing on his own claim. But we may conjure up the sort of conversation that would ensue if the anti-Wagnerian of the present, with his exalted view of Wagner as musician, met a still living anti-Wagnerian of the past, with his disparaging view. If the former heard an outburst of contempt from the latter he would hoarsely interject—under his breath, for fear of being heard (you see, we must now, for the moment, make every clause intimate a conscious intellectual purpose)—“Stow that, you utter fool! Give it in, and throw it at them. Chuck it in their faces, and then we can keep back much longer what they advance regarding his prose writings. If you do not affect to see the supreme musician in Wagner, then you only make yourself laughed at. It's too late for any more of that kind of anti-Wagnerianism: play the same game now, with us, as you played formerly without us. We have learnt a lot from you; learn something

from us now. You need not try the old methods with the new generation." But the anti-Wagnerian of the past would look dazed at the unexpected load which his friend was asking his intellect to carry. All he could say would be a stolid "*J'y suis, j'y reste.*" He feels no more. He feels a confused sound proceeding from Wagner which to him is not music, and he can wave his arms about to show his disgust. At that intellectual boundary he stops. The rest of his disgust is sheer demonstration of incapacity to take any more in this world than he just feels. How these two must hate each other, like the two barrels of oysters Thackeray saw on each side of the fishmonger's door, one labelled ninepence, the other tenpence half-penny! Alberich and Mime, each with their freshness gone. We must pity them, but it is doubtful if we can help them at all. They will both die out in the course of time, and all the sooner if we exert ourselves just a little. Before I have done I will prove that Wagner was not to be judged as a musician, but as a dramatist; that since drama already contains a moral, just as life does, he did not need to make his characters *preach a social evangel*, and!

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that the very nature of the artist contradicts any necessity for *logical preparation for his task*. Every drama stimulates thought. Just have a little patience. Logic may follow.

No. 9. This misrepresentation makes one think Mr. Newman had the *Ring* before him when he penned the sentence which contains it. You remember, in the scene between Erda and Wotan, at the commencement of the third act of *Siegfried*, what Erda utters :—

“Who taught defiance, scourges defiance?  
Who roused the deed is wroth with the deed?  
The defender of right, the guardian of truth,  
Resists the right though falsehood reigns?”

Wotan's tragic position as the head of traditional authority impells him to sacrifice the very thing he loves as human being.

Now consider Mr. Newman :

“The man with no notion of reality believed that he alone saw reality as it actually was ; the man whose every conception was abstract, and *à priori* lamented the tendency of other men to live in abstractions ; the man whose powers failed whenever he came to touch a concrete question ;—must needs attempt to deal with the most intricate of all concrete questions in the most unsuitable of all possible mediums.”

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Notice the difference. Erda was interrogative ; Mr. Newman is determinative. He also indulges in such superlatives that we must add the words which precede the above quotation. Every fault is superlative. Wagner, we read, had "no notion of reality"—not a tiny little morsel ; and then to this Wagner added the belief "that he alone saw reality as it actually was." We see, by Mr. Newman, no one else in the wide world—not even Shakespeare, Beethoven, or Schopenhauer : Wagner alone. *Every* conception was abstract. *Every*—notice the "every," reader, dear ; not a trifling exception. "All the chickens and their dam at one fell swoop." Wagner's powers failed *whenever* he came to touch a concrete question. No exception ; not even the theatre at Bayreuth. So Mr. Newman keeps it up to the bitter end, *labouring under the most pathetic delusion that he was contributing anything of the slightest value to the intellectual store of the Wagnerian question ; or, if we keep up the italics in order to supply Mr. Newman's own words to Wagner, of the human race.* Thus Wagner's drama was the *most* intricate, the *most* unsuitable, of *all possible* mediums. The self-delusion was *complete*. Such a fearful eclipse of



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mental powers has never been heard of. Poor, poor Wagner, we weep for you, and for ourselves who have found our early convictions expressed in this drama of the *Ring* as nowhere else.

But Wagner may be, for all we know, in spite of Mr. Newman, as follows: the man who, in virtue of being a dramatist, saw the reality of life as only a dramatist can; the man whose very apperception freed him from the possibility of dealing in abstractions; the man who adopted as his guide in philosophy him who has best exposed the impracticability of abstract knowledge as compared with intuitive knowledge; \* the man who, throughout a life of marvellous activity, encountered opposition and enmity as no other of our age has encountered it, relieved, indeed, by the generous help and love of friends and admirers, and after producing such concrete examples of his genius as eleven living dramas (counting the *Ring* as four), who succeeded,

\* A great part of Schopenhauer's philosophy might be considered as a treatise on Hamlet:

"And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action."

almost single-handed, in the direction of all details, in erecting the theatre which he deemed necessary to give effect to the great artistic idea contained in these dramas; the man who, in virtue of the popularity of his work, in the face of all misrepresentations, eventually enriched himself and his family, and, as Dr. Hugo Dinger says, "saved the opera-houses from outer as well as inner bankruptcy"; the man who made a Meyerbeer turn pale at the sound of his name:—such a man, we are to believe, lived as a mere preacher of abstractions. There is otherwise a very easy way of settling the dispute. Let Mr. Newman banish Wagner for a bit from his oppressed brain, and write us an essay on the subject, "Is Art abstract or concrete?" and then, even if Wagner is no more than the musician he would make us take him to be, the task of proving Wagner the absolute superlative abstract preacher would need to give place to that of the artistic musician moved to reproductions of actuality and reality. Such emotion is no abstraction; much rather, the negation of emotion is needed to wander from concrete life into that cold academic thought which is so needed to give birth to abstractions.

No. 10 shall close this list of misrepresentations ; and then we may again go through the article to show how Wagner is made the subject of a reproach which, if true, renders all others at least equally culpable, and thus withdraws all the sting of its application. Discussing *Lohengrin*, Mr. Newman quotes A. B. Marz to show that many auditors of *Lohengrin* have equally felt that it is a trivial matter for a man to leave a woman who loves him because she merely asks his name. This aspect, Mr. Newman says—

“never presented itself to Wagner. He was concerned with *Lohengrin* as the representative of certain social ideas which were of profound interest to the composer, but of little interest to any one else.”

Yes, indeed ; only the pity of it is that these very *social ideas* which Mr. Newman has in mind were not present to Wagner when he composed *Lohengrin*. It is to be feared the *handbook* theory will not avail much in this case. The poetic aim in *Lohengrin*, that which Wagner only excogitated when the poetic aim of the *Ring*—which again has to give place to a deeper—became apparent to him, is very beautiful, and very simple, and very old. *Lohengrin* demanded that love from an

earthly woman which he had not learnt to do justice to with the supreme confidence love itself demands. Thus, when the natural right to ask was indulged in by Elsa, Lohengrin brought about his and her fate by the unjustly imposed conditions, foreign to all ideas of love and confidence. People who love others confide in them. They do not provoke their curiosity. This is the moral of *Lohengrin*, and Wagner certainly was not conscious of this view of the drama when he wrote it. What are, then, the social ideas which lie in this, and are *of profound interest to the composer, but of little interest to any one else?* Mr. Newman might certainly have thought it incumbent on him to explain a little more, were it not that he worthily inherits that pervading vogue of anti-Wagnerianism of not feeling it incumbent on him to do more than misrepresent. All the wheels of the very regular clock of anti-Wagnerianism are so well fitted with an artificial means of supplying this grease of indifference that we may expect them to run for ever, till, indeed, no one is present to wind up the clock. The grease will always be there, nevertheless.

And so I end this part of the evidence before

the court of cassation, only recommending the reader, if he is not satisfied, to turn to pages 339 to 342 of the first volume of the English translation of the *Prose Works*, and read there how much Wagner and a certain friend thought over the *dénouement* of *Lohengrin*. Then the justification, or want thereof, of Mr. Newman's remark will become apparent. For an article of nine leaves, ten such misrepresentations are quite up to the standard of anti-Wagnerianism; and it would be an easy matter to extend them.\*

If, now, the reader cares to consider Wagner only as one man among many, then his determination to give Wagner his proper place among men must be guided by two regulations, one of which never allows the critic to wander beyond the bounds of relativity, and the other which refuses to conduct a prosecution against Wagner based on reproaches that are at all times equally applicable to any and all of the total individuals within that given relativity. Mr. Newman sets both of these guides to a proper placing of one

\* Mr. Newman has superficially, in his book, treated this subject at greater length, without ever dwelling on the idea of *Lohengrin* as God and *Elsa* as human being.

man among others at defiance. He seems to carry around with him some out-of-the-way abstract ideal, of which he is either so heartily ashamed or so deeply enamoured that he does not feel constrained to mention it. When, by mere accident, he drops on a reproachful phrase which might serve to give us a clue to his positive philosophy, it turns out to be so completely harmless as a reproach against Wagner that one feels inclined to ask, What on earth has come over the senses of anti-Wagnerians? Such a misdirected reproach is conveyed in one query of Mr. Newman's: "Has 'traditional morality' no justification?" For a man considering a work like the *Ring*, this is an astounding question. But I will come back to this. Here I am concerned with showing that, if Mr. Newman's objections to Wagner are justified, he has no conception of the real force, application, and range, of his objections. He sweeps everything off the board that ever gave light to man, and, thank goodness, his own darkness as well.

Before giving two or three instances of this pointless system of reproach, I will call attention to another little unconscious trick which helps

Mr. Newman, as it does all anti-Wagnerians, along to any other goal than that he has in view—namely, the “downing” of Wagner. He throws the dirty child Wagner out of the bath with such determination that both bath and water are swept away with just as little remorse as he would like to sweep Wagner away, and nothing at all is left behind. But he has to come back to Wagner’s idea after all. After Wagner has launched forth “a number of pseudo-propositions that explain nothing”; after some “*banal* rhetoric about the ‘annulling of the State,’ the ‘free self-determining individual,’ and the rest of it”;—we get the following, which, Mr. Newman fails to see, reinstates Wagner in the position he occupies as man among men, and as an eminent thinker among a thoughtless crowd. Listen to Mr. Newman saving himself, as he thinks he is doing, while he just merely demonstrates that that which he gave as a criticism of Wagner was itself no more than *banal pseudo-propositions that simply explain nothing*. How grateful we are to him to learn that the following is, after all, still a problem :

“There is, of course, the perennial problem of the respective spheres of activity of the individual and the

State, how far the State is morally justified in restraining the impulses and desires of the individual, and how far these impulses and desires are morally right as against those conventions of the State which alone make individual existence possible" [how kind of Mr. Newman to tell us all this !],—"these are problems that do indeed press for solution. But no one with a grain of philosophical ability will set about the business in the manner of Wagner, retailing foolish platitudes instead of arguing and maundering for pages together about those precious entities, 'the State,' 'Society,' and 'the individual.'"

And thus we get the anti-Wagnerian, on the rant with his own *airy jargon*, telling us that Wagner inflicted "his frothy rhetoric upon an unoffending world." Just have a little patience, and we will see about that. In the meantime, I feel I must relieve myself. Let us pray. Let us cross ourselves. Let us confess. Let us do something in the orthodox way of the religionist, if only to lull the rousing disposition to say something rude and offensive. Great heavens, it is enough to make a man leave all literature and journalism to anti-Wagnerians to have exactly Mr. Newman—what a fate to be born to!—accusing Wagner of *retailing foolish platitudes instead of arguing*, and then misrepresenting Wagner to prove it.



Where does Mr. Newman argue? Is it argument to say that Wagner retailed *foolish platitudes*? Proof, dear sir! Proof! How can a platitude be foolish, anyway? Would to heaven, for his own sake, Mr. Newman had confined himself to the wholesale manufacture of nothing worse! Folly is a rather nice thing; and as to platitudes, I have rather a weakness in admiring them, and often have on my lips or in my thoughts that one of Shakespeare's,

"The quality of mercy is not strained,"

etc. And again, Wagner's essay on State and Religion is a beautiful variation on, and elaboration of, the same theme. Let us have platitudes adorned with the genius of a truthful man to any extent. *Rings of the Nibelung* which last a month, if the genius likes. How can it harm you if I take delight in them?

The first of these harmless bolts which Mr. Newman launches against Wagner is directed against the hope of a happy condition for mankind on a physical basis, resulting in universal brotherhood. Now if Mr. Newman had ever been troubled with the necessity of opposing to Wagner

some authority equally as lucid and clear and outspoken as Wagner, then I should have known with whom I was dealing. But no suspicion of this moral obligation crosses Mr. Newman's brain. He would play chess with another man, and his method would be, instead of making a move under the same conditions as his opponent, to heave a brick at him when the other had made his move. He takes it for granted, judging, more by the articles in the *Musician* than in this one of the *Fortnightly*, that there exists some adopted standard held to by what he calls vaguely "the rest," which Wagner's abnormality has ruthlessly destroyed. Where is exactly "this rest"? and what is its standard? What a pity Mr. Newman has no "philosophy," no "authority," no "faith"! He slings ink. Like any cuttle-fish, he ejects, in his intuitive sense of the proximity of danger, an inky fluid, which renders the attack of the opponent vain. Were Mr. Newman a Hegelian, I could deal with him nicely after a little study in abstract theories; but the little I do know of Hegel, coupled with the demands Dr. Stirling makes on those who would conscientiously study him, is not exactly calculated to attract me specially towards

Hegel, interesting and grand though such abstract philosophizing is. Life is too short and too practical to make a point of deliberately studying Hegel's abstract Idea for application to all the vogues of life, specially for one whose belief is that all abstract reasoning and philosophizing should be directed towards showing up the uselessness of abstractions in comparison with the intuitions of man.

The more we land ourselves in this huge sea, the more it looks like a modern reproduction of Nero fiddling while Rome burns. But since Mr. Newman does not say he is a Hegelian, it is impossible to deal with him on such lines. Had Mr. Newman declared himself a follower of Fichte, then the doctrine of that worthy and enthusiastic believer in man's ultimate career would not allow the difference between him and Wagner to be made the cause of reproach in one instance and not in another. But Mr. Newman says nothing of Fichte. Were Mr. Newman a Spencerian, then the equilibration theory, which causes Mr. Arthur Balfour to say that we should be all idiots before we arrive at it, would put Mr. Newman in the box giving evidence for Wagner instead of against

him. For the difference between a Spencer and a Wagner is just the difference between a scientific and an artistic temperament, with one and the same general end in view—namely, a cessation of the awful and immoral strife and inequality between individuals caused by the egoism of the individual. But Mr. Newman never utters a hint as to whose service he is working in, although, in spite of all reticence, I know well enough whose service that is. Probably he does not know at all; but I will tell him. It is just that very preacher to whom he naïvely confesses a dislike. But this is in confidence. Don't blurt it out, or else they all will adapt their methods so as to avoid the danger which threatens them; they will adopt the same subtle process Conservatives adopt in Parliament when they "dish the Whigs." It is a grand process undoubtedly, this taking the wind out of the sails of your opponents, but the Liberal party will need to practise it if ever they want to pilot their own policy through Parliament.

Leaving aside the mention of other authors who have faith in the physical perfection of mankind, let any one ask himself, Out of the numberless writers and thinkers of the past on this subject,

whose works are still read and treasured because of the genial method and style which pervades them; and out of the numberless writers of the present who indulge in the same dream;—why should special game be made exactly of Wagner on this ground when he has, of all, treated the ideal in the most beautiful way? At any rate, here he kept free from mixing up his optimism with a professed belief in the religion of Christianity, which knows nothing of this physical perfection. And therein lies the great merit of Wagner. Our preachers have no idea that Judaism and Christianity are poles of religious thought. Their Judaism serves to ensure them their nice, comfortable respectability, their official status and salary. It delivers them safely within Court and State precincts without a stain on their character, and serves to make them ignominiously trample on those who ever dare to hint that their lives and their respectability and their position is gained only at the expense of that religion, the having of which on their lips and the stamping of it on their ceremonies, they will not see, condemns them with the utmost severity. Now, Wagner never stooped to this shocking display of either ignorance or wilful

misrepresentation. His reputation was not gained at the expense of adulterating a pessimistic religion with an egoistic ; and since I have promised to bring disinterested testimony to show how Wagner's life and work was pervaded with a due sense of the obligations of not forcing a contrary pole of thought into its opposite, and thus that it possesses a perfectly exceptional merit, I will quote from an article on "Poetry" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, from the pen of Mr. Theodore Watts, which accuses other great men of what Wagner's mighty *Ring* is free from.

Having all along contended that one of the great merits of the *Ring* is its consistency—that being, so far as all drama is concerned, a necessary merit—then that which is the exceptional merit of a select company cannot be denied to Wagner, if also true of him. But, in point of fact, the whole turning point of the conscious action of the *Ring*, resting, as it does, on Wotan, gives Wagner's work a significance which belongs to none of those for whom Mr. Watts reserves his praise, after discarding Milton, Shelley, and Victor Hugo. The question, then, is : given an optimistic faith—*i.e.* a belief in the goodness of this world, and the

possibility of man's ultimate brotherhood—does not a dramatist or a poet bring testimony of inconsistency to light if he blunders into a phrase which sets his own optimistic belief at naught? Listen now to Mr. Watts. He has just drawn attention to this want of unity of purpose, and then adds :

“In recent English poetry, the motive of Shelley's dramatic poem *Prometheus Unbound* is a notable example of what is here contended. Starting with the full intent of developing a drama from motive—starting with a universalism, a belief that good shall be the final goal of ill, Shelley cannot finish his first three hundred lines without shifting (in the curse of Prometheus) into a Manichaeism as pure as that of Manes himself :

‘Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this curse,  
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good  
Both infinite as is the universe.’

According to the central thought of the poem, human nature, through the heroic protest and struggle of the human mind, typified by Prometheus, can at last dethrone that supernatural terror and tyranny (Jupiter) which the human mind had installed. But after its dethronement (when human nature becomes infinity perceptible), how can the supernatural tyranny exist apart from the human mind that imagined it? How can it be as ‘infinite as the universe’? The motive

of *Paradise Lost* is assailed with much vigour by Victor Hugo in his poem *Religions et Religion*. But when M. Hugo, in the after-parts of the poem, having destroyed Milton's 'God,' sets up an entirely French 'dieu' of his own and tries 'to justify' him, we perceive how pardonable was Milton's failure after all. Compare such defect of mental grip and such nebulosity of thought as is displayed by Milton, Shelley, and M. Hugo, with the strength of hand shown in the 'Sálámán' and 'Absal' of Jami, and, indeed, by the Sufi poets generally."

Then Mr. Watts goes on to point out how the Niblung story (not the Nibelungen Lied), as well as the Iliad, possesses this needed unity of purpose and entire freedom of movement. Who can detect any such flaw in Wagner? With regard to Wagner's drama, however, there are two further points to be noted—firstly, how, with the growing consciousness of existence, this abdication of 'god' is put into the hands of the chief 'god' himself (Wotan), developed from two self-subjected and human tendencies, namely, the love for unlimited power and the love for his own offspring; and secondly, what is to us of far more importance, in fact, to my humble mind, the greatest event of the whole century—how Wagner, by this dramatic



fostering of humanity, drew closer to and finally adopted the Christian religion, without abating one jot of his anti-theistic tendency. To purge Christianity from the Jupiter of the Jews! What an undertaking! And, with the Schopenhauerian philosophy as a base, Wagner has done it, so far as the intellectual part of the undertaking is concerned. As to the practical, that did not rest with him alone.

I will now take another of Mr. Newman's assertions regarding the *Ring*, which, in giving vent to, he deludes himself into considering a reproach. It contains no reproach whatever, except a self-reproach.

"Now the scheme of the *Ring*, in so far as it leaves the broad currents of human passion, and affects to preach a social or philosophical evangel, is essentially a childish one."

So where the *Ring* is simple it is "childish," and where it is complex it is "airy jargon"!

Leaving aside the sneer contained in "*affects to preach a social or philosophical evangel*," and also the queer idea of reproaching a scheme which gets simple—I will not use the word "childish"—as it leaves the currents of human passion, I want

to know what sort of a reproach lies in this? Is the jealousy in *Othello*, because it deals with such a thing as a handkerchief, less ably treated on that account? Is the *Merchant of Venice* invalidated on account of the trivial scheme of hinging a woman's future on a choice of one out of three caskets, or the quibble about the necessary amount of flesh which would turn the scale in the estimation of a hair.

"The heart-thought of the greatest epic in all literature is simply that Achilles was vexed, and that the fortunes of the world depended upon the whim of a sulky hero."—Article "*Poetry*," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Says Mr. Newman :

"Are we to have all our doubts allayed by this sentimental rhapsodizing about love, and by the assurance that if we were all actuated by no other motive than love we should all be very happy? No doubt; but that is not a very profound philosophy, nor does one need it preached at him in a four-barrelled opera."

*Sentimental rhapsodizing!* It is very kind indeed of Mr. Newman to label the *Ring* such, and then hold it up to scorn; only, the man who poisons a stream and then declaims against the

use of its water is not usually taken seriously. Is the *Ring* sentimental rhapsodizing? That is one question Mr. Newman, by his biassed style of making assertion stand for proof and misrepresentation for evidence, not to mention his petulance and evident vexation, goes far to answer in the negative. I ask the reader just to have a little patience as regards the question of "love" and Wagner's *Prose Works*; we will come to that presently. But as to the drama of the *Ring*, and the part love plays in that, how it gives birth to music which is developed in the most unenforced way out of motives having their equal significance as regards the dramatic and tragic contrast—namely, Power without love—if Mr. Newman means to make a clearance of this factor, or reduce it to an essentially childish evangel—be it so. Love, undoubtedly, is not diplomatic. I have here nothing to urge against it, except the very just reminder that a few others are also implicated in the artistic *preaching* of this *social* or *philosophical*(?) *evangel*; and Mr. Newman must have some special reason for selecting Wagner out of a crowd to make him bear the burden of so common a fault.

## *The anti-Wagnerian of the Present* 117

"And Love he sent to bind  
The disunited tendrils of that vine  
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart."  
(SHELLEY, *Prometheus Unbound*.)

Eliminate love from the drama by all means,  
only do not commence with Wagner.

Here is a truly sweet sentence from Mr.  
Newman :

"One sometimes arises with a feeling of sadness from the study of the *Ring* and Wagner's writings connected with it—a feeling of pity that this man should have spent precious year after year of his life gnawing at his heart to no purpose, embittering his days and nights with long meditation on questions that any clear-headed schoolboy could quickly have settled for him. For it must be reiterated that Wagner had no more capacity for philosophical speculation than the average curate."

Poor average curate, you little think you have had in these words the greatest compliment paid that ever was accorded you. Mr. Newman's *clear-headed schoolboy* is too utterly funny as a reproach. Of course, my dear sir, any *clear-headed* schoolboy could settle anything; provided he was clear-headed, the fact of his being a schoolboy would not stand in the light. If Mr. Newman

were asked whether the merit lay in the clear head or in the schoolboy, I wonder in which it would be! Perhaps Wagner was clear-headed, though he had not the inestimable benefit—as it would seem Mr. Newman holds it to be—of remaining a schoolboy. Mr. Newman does not seem quite capable of understanding the spread-eagling effect that a qualifying adjective has on an abstract or general substantive.

Mr. Newman, again, would make shift to tackle and quickly settle a profound philosophical question—as usual, to Wagner's detriment. That question is the one concerning the position the individual holds to liberty and necessity, a question on which Mr. Newman, in spite of all that superiority which allows him to ridicule a man like Wagner, has not condescended to enlighten us a bit. Mr. Newman prefers to throw ridicule on one who has enlightened us considerably, or, at least, who has risked his reputation in trying to do so. That is sufficient for us here, where we are not obliged to prove Wagner right in order to show Mr. Newman the method proper to criticism. Now, it seems that one of these *fanatics, echoing, parrot-like*, Wagner's ideas, who

was animated by a desire to elucidate in some manner the *frothy rhetoric* which Wagner *inflicted on an unoffending world*, wrote how Wagner held in the *Ring* that "man's salvation lay in recognising necessity in Nature, and in yielding to it instead of opposing it." Here is Mr. Newman's comment :

"Well, the comment upon that kind of thing is that it is painfully reminiscent of the dialectic of the young curate.\* What *is* necessity in nature? If there is 'necessity,' can it be opposed? and if it can be opposed, ought it to be called necessity? Wagner's doctrine was that 'We must will the inevitable, and accomplish it spontaneously.' But what conception could he have had of the inevitable? If you can will whatever you like, and get it, then necessity is not inevitable; and if you cannot get what you want by willing—if you can only get what inevitable necessity has predestined for you—then it is superfluous to talk 'of accomplishing freely what necessity wills.' "

Now let us just see how other people—without the fixed idea of "downing" Wagner at any cost—approach these perennial subjects of necessity and liberty, with the individual, as thinking being, wedged in between them. The idea of bringing

\* It is a *young* curate this time. Last it was an *average*. Pity we did not get a bishop to start with.

man's actions into conformity with a paramount nature is not new ; and no more new is the idea that the very conception of liberty, which man cannot get rid of, is degraded by some in order to impose on others artificial laws which a more honest use of that conception declares to us to be no part of the laws of Nature, or of that free-Will which, in the Schopenhauerian sense, stands for what most people call God, with a most important difference, to be noted immediately. Pick up an elementary book on logic—in this instance Jevons—and you read :

“The laws of thought are natural laws, with which we have no power to interfere, and which are, of course, not to be in any way confused with the artificial laws of a country, which are invented by men, and can be altered by them.”

Listen to what a scientific thinker of Huxley's ability says :

“The history of civilisation details the steps by which men have succeeded in building up an artificial world within the Cosmos. Fragile reed as he may be, man, as Pascal says, is a thinking reed, where lies within him a fund of energy, operating intelligently, and so far akin to that which pervades the universe that it is competent to influence and modify the cosmic process.”

Necessity is not got rid of because some men have been able to impose artificial laws on others, any more than an Almighty "God" is got rid of because he is accorded the power to answer prayer, and thereby the power to change his mind at another's direction, if that other will only ask often enough. For evidently if "God" had first one purpose, and his own miserable creation could effect by prayer an alteration in that purpose, it can be urged that "God" is of no use to man, except when man directs him what to do. So, with Necessity to Wagner; only instead of grovelling before it, we have willingly to conform to it. This ultimate power, which, in its apartness from the power of any individual or aggregate of certain individuals, awes us as something we cannot realise, is then called by most people "God"; and many, indeed most, cling to the same word "God," although sectarianism compels one and all of them to read their own vulgar characters into it. *Non deus vulgi negare profanum, sed vulgi opiniones diis applicare profanum.*

"It is not profanity to deny the gods of the vulgar, but it is profanity to attribute the opinions of the vulgar to the gods."—See Bacon's essay on "Atheism."



Therefore, what an ordinary person under the guidance of the *average* or *young* curate, who, according to Mr. Newman, has a *dialectic reminiscent* of Wagner, or *vice versa*, calls "God," and invests with his individual and wonderful virtues, Wagner calls Necessity, and refrains from investing it with his. Herbert Spencer calls it "The *Unknowable*," Hegel (at times) "*The Idea*," Schopenhauer "*Will*," Ed. v. Hartmann "*The Unconscious*"; and the great and honest advance from orthodoxy consists in the fact that these men thereby preclude themselves at the start from making their stock of consciousness and their deliberate purpose fit into that of a universal and supreme power—no little achievement in the way of honest subjective thinking, I can tell you.\* Well, then, Necessity, or Will, or "God," being paramount, it is wise to recognise it, just as in the case of Mrs. Partington, her broom, and the Atlantic Ocean. A man may wave his arms about to scare away an eclipse, but only his fancy and vanity attribute the result to that action. It is better for him if he recognises the Necessity in Nature and yields to it, than if he tries to oppose

\* Is it possible that the vital distinction escapes any one ?

it. An unpractical man may pray to his "God," and spend *precious year after year of his life gnawing at his heart to no purpose, embittering his days and nights with long meditation on questions that any clear-headed schoolboy could quickly have settled for him*, to save his house from being struck by lightning. A practical man will have a conductor put up, and save his time by yielding to, instead of opposing Nature.

All thought has had to struggle with this idea of mankind in between two obvious forces, of which he can get rid of neither. Thus, where man has the idea of liberty rooted in his intelligible character, he, in accepting an artificial law, which may certainly well serve a temporal or practical purpose, makes himself dishonest in forcing it down the throats of others as moral, when its moral—not practical—value has been open to dispute at every stage of the existence of that artificial law. The separation of the two vogues—namely, that of necessity and liberty, that of the empirical and the intelligible character, which are both conditions of man's thought—forms a fundamental part of Kant's philosophy. He

says (Part III. of the *Transcendental Dialectic*—Meiklejohn's translation):

“And thus nature and freedom, each in the complete and absolute signification of these terms, can exist, without contradiction or disagreement, in the same action.”

Kant says also :

“The intelligible ground of phenomena in this subject does not concern empirical questions.”

So when we pass on to the moral consideration of our ideas—

“the idea of an *ought* or a duty indicates a possible action, the ground of which is a pure conception ; while the ground of a merely natural action is, on the contrary, always a phenomenon. An action, then, in so far as it is to be ascribed to an intelligible cause, does not result from it in accordance with empirical laws.”

All idea of falsehood would vanish if empirical laws could exist apart from a mind. But refer it to the intelligible character, and thus the very mental capacity which has given rise to the bare idea of what a falsehood consists of is the bar before which this falsehood can be tried. Wagner's

yielding to Nature meant merely this, then : that man, before forcing into his intelligence the duty of charging artificial restriction with a moral importance, should become clear on the adaptation of his wants to the providence of Nature, and the providence of Nature to his wants. The sense or non-sense of this stands or falls with the acceptance or denial of optimism, *i.e.* a problematically perfect state for mankind on a physical or sensuous basis.

Coming now back to the question of "Drama," and what its influence is as a factor in the mental cultivation of the age, let us ask what is implied by Mr. Newman's words in the following :

"If there was one point upon which he was more positive than any other, it was the stupidity of regarding his works as mere operas—a mere combination of music and poetry."

"They were dramas ; and not merely dramas in the ordinary sense of the word, but lights upon man and the universe, elucidations of problems of life and art and conduct."

Well, that certainly takes the cake. Will Mr. Newman stand up on any platform and say, in the first place, that Drama ever was anything

else *in the ordinary sense of the word*. What can, then, *this ordinary sense of the word* be which is your irrevocable standard? And does even the most ordinary sense of the word "drama" ever exclude what Wagner said Drama consisted of? Heavens and earth! Did one ever come across the like of this attempt to make out that Wagner saw in his dramas what the *ordinary* Drama did not contain? Who ever, apart from the dictionary, defined the *ordinary sense*? Mr. Newman evidently thinks a drama starts into existence only when a certain number of pages have been taken up with writing dialogue which has been divided into scenes and acts. But assuredly Drama is action, and action is life, and life is itself *the only light upon man and the universe*, and is itself *the only elucidation of problems of life and art and conduct*. DIE WELT GESCHICHTE IST DAS WELT GERICHT. As I am also concerned here to show that others, who do not merely *echo, parrot-like*, Wagner's ideas, hold, on the broad question, similar ideas to Wagner, I will just quote the following from Mr. R. Moulton's *The Ancient Classical Drama* :

"Tragedy is a mode of thought, as well as a form

of art ; not only will serious poetry naturally be thoughtful, but it is impossible to construct a story on any considerable scale without its reflecting conceptions of the social framework, and speculations as to the principles on which the world is governed" (page 93).

And if any one calls in question Wagner's view of the Antigone episode, and repeats what Mr. Newman says—namely, that Wagner was prone to read extraneous meanings into *artistic products*, and that he tried to incorporate *subtle theories* into his dramatic work—I will quote Professor Lewis Campbell, Mr. Jebb, and others to show that the difference between them and him in the exposition of the Sophoclean tragedy is that Wagner was more thorough. Nothing that Wagner says refutes what they say. He takes it all more comprehensively and seriously. His merit was just to be more thorough and perspicacious than others.

But I have gone far enough. Apart from this,\*

\* The reader must remember this applies to the article in the *Fortnightly*, and not to Mr. Newman's book as a whole. I would be the last one to underrate Mr. Newman's capacity for criticising Wagner's artistic work. But on the Drama as a mode of thought Mr. Newman parts company with the critic, to betray a marked materialism. He could never explain why Siegmund the Volsung is morally greater than Hunding. Apart from this, every Wagnerian is under a debt of gratitude to Mr. Newman, for his

I would like to expose the misrepresentation regarding the *banal rhetoric* of the "annulling of the State," and will do so at any time to oblige Mr. Newman or any one who is not yet convinced. It will, however, be practically included in the short exposition of the aim and purpose of Wagner's theory. I want now only to survey this article of the *Fortnightly* to see whether any kind of foothold exists, any positive doctrine, whereby one can find room to range himself alongside of Mr. Newman. For this purpose I have come across only one remark of Mr. Newman's which gives rise to any idea that he believes in anything, and that consists in his naïve question, "Has 'traditional morality' no justification?" I have already drawn attention to the fact that Mr. Newman has little or no idea of the effect an adjective has on an abstract substantive. And I think that the individual who undertakes to write on Wagner's *Ring* drama, and at the same

outspoken words on page 390 of his book, not to mention the fine critical work as regards the dramatic development in Wagner, and the historical aspect of poet and composer. Where Mr. Newman fails is where the great public begins to recognise in Wagner and Art what it now takes to lie in its priests and churches. And Mr. Newman, having failed on this head, determined to make a proper business of it, when he was about it.

time fails to dwell on the fact of how just exactly this *precious entity*, "traditional morality," gets its due justification, how it gives rise to the conquest of Fricka over Wotan; to Wotan's agony of soul in having to condemn his own offspring; to Brünnhilde's noble disobedience in defying conventional laws for humane, just as Antigone did; to Siegmund's death; to Sieglinde's misery;—must look for some permanent virtue in this *precious entity* which the *average curate* would have difficulty, even with his bishop to help him, in finding. Yes; *traditional* morality has, indeed, its justification. *That is just the trouble.* It is not morality however, but that self-same vague and abstract commodity made concrete by the qualifying adjective "traditional." I wonder why so many people are blind to the real effect of this little qualification which so alters an abstract substantive, or even a concrete one, in practical life as to render us the original with a new face. Did you, for instance, ever go into a fishmonger's shop, and, after demanding a sole, have a *lemon* sole laid down before you, with a smile of unctuous rectitude on the face of the monger? Were you, then, on gently insinuating



that what you wanted was a sole, and not that inferior article, a lemon sole, met with a defiant: "Is there no such thing as a lemon sole?" and, standing reproved, take up what was given you and go home meekly? Wagner has done such justice to this *precious entity*, traditional morality, that, if I remember aright, it was the critic of the *Daily News* who, enamoured of the opportunity offered him by Wagner's dramatic ability, said that the sympathies of the British—I hope it was English, but I really forget—would always be with Hunding. And so let it remain for those who think so. The merit of the dramatist lies just in that ability to satisfy both sides and do justice to both parties. Who could tell, from the overture to *Tannhäuser*, whether Wagner was a believer in the morality of the Venusberg, or that of the pilgrims? Why, all the same, did Wagner not make this Venusberg music exactly open the overture? Why, then, did not the pilgrims' music break in on that, and, after a repeated climax, attempt a third time to maintain its supremacy? Why did not, then, the strains of the Venusberg again gain the ascendancy, and drown the ineffectual

attempt of the pilgrims to hold its own? Why? Well, I leave that to the anti-Wag. to answer. Some reason certainly exists that at the end the religious conquers the sensual. In the *Walküre*, Siegmund gets his due from his own loving father, according to the traditional morality of the State. Sieglinde's career is not altogether honey and roses, so let the traditional moralist revel. Why should he complain of the want of justification? What on earth, in the name of reason, has Mr. Newman to complain about? He insists that the fault of the *Ring* lies in the fact that it sets forth one-sided views, which are just as easily refuted in another "tract" of the same category. All you have to do is to *sit down*. Here is what he says :

"As Flaubert said, the objection to writing a novel to prove something is that any one can sit down and write a novel to prove just the opposite ; you have only to select and ignore the material at your disposal. But when the 'philosophy' of the work is forced down your throat, and you are compelled to make some effort to digest it, and you find yourself disagreeing with it for reasons that are patent to any one who will think, you are not inclined to be very 'reverent' to the philosopher, or to his admirers."

Evidently not; and neither are we to his detractors and misrepresenters. But, pray, who ever forced it down your, or any one's, throat? And why do you not set to work and *sit down* to write the tract which is going to be filled up with the morality Wagner so wilfully discarded? How long, O Lord? I doubt unless Mr. Newman gets sufficient support from the believers in that *precious entity*, traditional morality, we must make up our minds to preserve our equanimity and suppress our curiosity for a long time. But when that "sitting down" has been accomplished, what will the critic of the *Daily News* say, if I am right in my supposition that it was he who was answerable for the sympathies of the British—let us hope English, and only a small part of them—being enlisted on the side of Hunding? I wonder, when this genius of traditional morality has been found, would he take my advice, and avoid *inflicting his frothy rhetoric on an unoffending world*? I can assure him, as a Liberal, that traditional morality is *forced down* our throats quite enough, without the help of inspired artists. Paid ones are good enough for that. Says Mr. Newman :

"It is a somewhat saddening spectacle, this of the artist quivering under the blows of the huge, unfriendly world."

*Banal rhetoric!* I know of something much more saddening, and that is the spectacle of the world inflicting these blows. It was not a pleasant thing to read of the "blows" that the traditional moralist, the Archbishop, inflicted on Mozart. He succumbed ; Wagner endured.

Now I think I may draw this to a close by pointing out a pervading fallacy of Mr. Newman's articles, and by asking him a question which I very much doubt if he can answer. The fallacy consists in this: Mr. Newman takes Wagner for a man who musicalised verse before the practical composition of the verse. The peculiar verse really is adapted to the music ; Rossini, and the rest, musicalised the verse after it was written. With this idea in his head, he ignores, and only once mentions, in order to ridicule, the contention of Wagner's theory—namely, that Drama\* is the thing which gives birth to poetry, gesture, and music. Each, in its way, fills up what is

\* Here is just what I insist on. There is no monopoly in the use of the word Drama, as Mr. Newman thinks there is.

lacking in the other to alone carry the poetic aim of the Drama, set in a stage picture. The question consists in this: How could Wagner "fall a victim," first to Feuerbach, and then to Schopenhauer, and yet, as Mr. Newman insists, be unable to re-adjust or correct his own views by those of other men. Wagner, Mr. Newman says, was a man who could only assimilate "so much of other men's ideas as happened to harmonize with his own." And yet he was able to fall *a victim* to first one and then the other. The thing is impossible. Wagner must otherwise have been guilty of the very thing Mr. Newman says he was not capable of. And I would like to ask the reading public whether, *at this time of day* (the italicised words are all Mr. Newman's), *in the year 1898*, writers who have serious convictions of the shortcomings of a great man, help their case by indulging in expressions of this kind: *vaporising; windy jargon; weaving cloudy schemes; misty ways; banal rhetoric; retailing foolish platitudes; maundering for pages together about these precious entities, "the State," "Society," and the "Individual"; inflicting his frothy rhetoric on an unoffending world; mediocre capacity; airy jargon?*

As this was being finished, I saw that the *Edinburgh Review* was the next magazine to give space to the question. I opened it with misgiving, hoping against hope for something reasonable. But in vain. *Mich dünkt ich kenne diesen Klage Ruf*. So it is now to be *twenty years—or so* (bless that “or so”; anti-Wagnerian humour is too unconscious of its effect) before the bubble bursts. Ten years ago Wagnerism was alluded to as an antiquarian curiosity. And furthermore, Meyerbeer is to be rehabilitated, and we are to find something more in him than we think. Yes, I know ; it will be that change of colour. The only pity is that the Meyerbeerites do not learn this virtue from their master. I wonder, will the mistresses of the Jockey Club be solicited to support the coming rehabilitation? Agents should apply now, to prevent disappointment. When the laughter had subsided at the reading of the “twenty years or so,” a friend of mine said he had often wanted to make some money out of this Wagner question. He doubted whether any anti-Wagnerian assertion was capable of finding a backer, but he said he had a lot of money to invest in the speculation—namely, whether, in twenty years (dropping the

"or so"), on January 1, 1919, Wagner's works will be better known and more popular and more worthily performed than now. I tried to dissuade my impetuous friend from such a project, as too undignified for Art, but he said there was little fear of ever hearing a word from an anti-Wagnerian; their abuse being "*frothy rhetoric*." But this offer would, at any rate, show that on this side one person was ready to support his convictions.

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In giving what cannot be more than broad hints as to the correct and only profitable manner of procedure in criticising Wagner's *Prose Writings*, I am first of all driven back on the necessity of dwelling on a commonplace which, it is to be feared, is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. What I mean is this: that since our knowledge is only relative, no man's work can be established in its own right,\* apart from classification or specification of a scientific value.

I do not pretend to be able to enter into the psychology of the man Wagner, but I must enter into the justification of regarding the artist as

\* Just as there is no music *per se*.

equally an authorised judge of human affairs as any other. The validity of his judgment arises from the obvious shortcomings of two others, one of whom, as philosopher, constitutes himself a judge, and therefore is free from all State interference, or ought to be; and another who, although appointed by the State, has only his integrity secured if he also is free from State control. We see what a dangerous thing the State must be. Let us, then, place the artist in between the philosopher, whose value is only secured by absolute freedom from all influence, and the judge, whose value is secured by complete accordance with regulations provided him for his guidance. Then let us suppose that the dispute of Peter and Paul comes before all three for decision. It will be seen that philosopher, judge, and artist have their separate spheres, each arising out of conditions which, presenting the same case from different aspects, and arriving at different results, do not invalidate each other. If any one were to ask the first to decide between Peter and Paul, he would aver that, as a philosopher, he had nothing to do with the difference between them as individuals, and that he had no intention



of departing from the vocation which the bent of his mind and the object of his studies had imposed on him. Enough for him that this was a world in which such disputes took place, of which this particular one could present no new feature to him. He feels that he is in a world which, without such disputes, without such opposition, he cannot conceive as existing ; and so far as Peter and Paul are concerned, they are no more to him than two armies shedding oceans of blood, or two plants, the one drawing away the nourishment from the other, or the aspect of night and day, winter and summer, succeeding each other. Let the dispute of Peter and Paul disappear, and then the world disappears as well. In this abstract fashion, steadily refusing to breathe a reproach against one or the other, but still regarding the condition *sine qua non* as necessarily having a moral significance, in view of a freedom of thought which is capable of conceiving another condition where no such everlasting dispute does exist, but where alone the idea of perfect morality exists, the philosopher regards the plurality Peter and Paul as interesting only where it merges into a synthesis. His business

with detail exists only in so far as it affords him material for relating the whole causal world to the Idea of the mind and the freedom of the Will, to both of which causality has not supplied the base ; nor does this fact in the least prevent the philosopher in his own person, and all that he utters, from being subject to the law of causality. But, so far as he is concerned, he recognises—being a metaphysician—no ultimate necessity in causality, or causality in no ultimate necessity. Thus, what is needful to the physicist is not needed by the metaphysician; and none the less is this the case because the metaphysician can himself never demonstrate an escape from the law of causality, or at best only negatively in words, since the mind must exist, for us at any rate, in the body, which is subject to causality—a fact which does not demonstrate the problem that a body is necessary to the will. In short, the philosopher has no positive standard, but seeks one constantly.

And all the time he is laying this down in lengthy treatises, are we to suppose that the dispute of Peter and Paul remains unsettled because there is no tribunal to bring it before?

If detail to the philosopher is of no interest till it is synthetically viewed in relation to a universalism, then to the judge the very opposite takes place.

Peter, and Paul before him, are exclusively of interest, with regard to a standard the right of, or the wrong of, which it is not his business to take into account. This standard serves to place Peter and Paul aside for trial, and as soon as the case is determined to the detriment of one—which is only the outcome of a previously incurred detriment between them, and thus according to human laws is a practical attempt to right a wrong in full view of the needed stability for the State—then the judge is occupied by another case on the same lines, and so on for ever. He suppresses every emotion, every suggestion, that one could call *a priori*; he acts legally, and the introduction of emotion is the first sign of danger for that judicial disinterestedness which alone permitted the judge to be nominated to the position he holds. Just as little as the philosopher had to interest himself in the divided individuality, so the judge has nothing more than this divided individuality to occupy his attention. *A priority*

for him is fixed in the statute. Universality is to him nothing. The philosopher's *à priori* is reduced finally to a condition without which everything vanishes. He takes ultimately nothing for granted, not even the conditions. The judge takes for granted the very last thing which, if the philosopher were ever in any such mood, he would accede to, from the aspect of morality. The statute under which the dispute is tried is sufficient to guide the judge to his decision.

For the artist, this statute which satisfies the temporal requirements of a court of law is just as unsatisfactory as the universality in the light of which the philosopher regards all disputes. The latter has neglected a something in which the artist is emotionally stirred to interest himself; and the judge, having shut emotion out, adopts a limitation which, to the artist's far-reaching sympathy, does not do justice to the universal aspect. The difference between Peter and Paul, which, to the philosopher, is one instance of a universal conflict, and, to the judge, contains guilt only in the light of the law, presents itself to the artist in such a way that what is excluded by the philosopher, in being restored to its right,

renders the judge's decision merely provisional. The artist is sympathetically stirred, and that sympathy serves to make his judgment as valid as the judgments of both philosopher and judge, since they had to exclude sympathy. Thus there is no argument from the artist. He knows intuitively so much as the philosopher must know, and the judge must not know—namely, that the dispute between Peter and Paul had no beginning with them, but was rooted *à priori* in human nature; and were this human nature only laid wholly bare before us, the fault of the legally victorious Paul would be shown to be equally the fault of the unsuccessful Peter. To lay bare human nature is his work. But here the work does not yet end for the artist, for he can never be satisfied with the assumed universality of the philosopher. He must guide us on a practical road. He still remains in a world of relations, and, deeply interested, he still regards the moral sense and value of these relations as they present themselves to him among all individuals, and not as a collective mass of individuals related only to an abstract Idea. The artist's intuition is always accompanied with the

sense of an obligation incurred by responsibility which, after it has reduced Peter and Paul to equal quantities, reveals a rift in the dispensation of justice, in the light of the moral obligations incurred by responsibility, widening in a new fashion the difference of that which, according to the law of the country, gave the judge the right to condemn Peter. It gives, now, the artist, with his deeper insight, the right, by the law of sympathy, and an intuitive knowledge of the universal aspect of the case, to condemn Paul, *provided his responsibility is greater*. And this is what the conventional world seeks never to express in words, and what the artist, by his sympathy, can only express in the drama. Thus the question for the artist is, How do the affairs of this contentious world make themselves fitting material for this most comprehensive form of Art—namely, the Drama? Convention only reveals the historical aspect, and, as such, suits the satire of the comedy-writer. But the tragedy brings about a death which, in displaying fate, is more than historical. We are plunged back into the dilemma that this death was brought about by some interference, for which authority has to be held morally responsible,

in virtue of what Kant calls man's intelligible character.

Apart from this intelligible character, no moral sense of the world's ways arises. To the reflective mind, then, the question presents itself, after having been imbued by the profound *rationale* of the drama, thus. Is the growth in official position accompanied by a corresponding growth in that conscious responsibility whereby alone the idea of morality can be engendered and its practice ensured? And if we adopt the moral significance of such words as *noblesse oblige*, does history present us with this quality of *noblesse* so engrained in and fostered by the kind of letters patent nobility out of which the State is manufactured that the Drama must, if it be true and actual, present us with a picture of an obstinate majority of revolting people in conflict with a beneficial and compassionate minority of nobles? I am afraid a very short survey of the independence of philosopher, artist, and even judge, will soon dispel any such idea, for, the needed separation from the State of the first two no one will call in question; and when we come to see that, just as the integrity of the judge is secured by making him above

the influence of the State, this very man, whose sole business it is to interpret justice according to the laws of the State, then we shall become aware of the danger of this State, where the growth of position and the growth of moral responsibility have never gone hand in hand. Therefore, as the comedy is a satire on the relationship of individuals in society, the tragedy is a satire on the relationship of individuals to authority. And it has not fallen to the province of either philosopher or judge to present to us the satire of either comedy or tragedy. That is reserved for the artist.

To Wagner then, in his *Prose Writings*, the world's affairs presented themselves primarily as material "stuff" for the highest, or, better said, most comprehensive form of Art—namely, the Drama; and those who wish to do justice to Wagner in his prose have to keep to the artist—Wagner questioning and enlightening himself as to how the Drama can point its moral without undertaking the defence of this or that tendency of either an age or an individual. The question, What is Art? can best be explained in his own words before proceeding to drop



a plumb-line vertically through Wagner's *Prose Writings*.

"Art, by the very meaning of the term, is nothing but the fulfilment of a longing to know oneself in the likeness of an object of one's love or adoration, to find oneself again in the things of the outer world."\*

And one more quotation may help to show up the essentially thoughtful and suggestive nature of Art, and yet, once for all, sever it from the abstract thought of the philosopher.

"We here have nothing to do . . . with thinking such as we meet it in philosophic science—for the Poet's path leads out of philosophy and into the Art-work, into a *realisement of the thought* in physical presence."†

Having, however, yet a lingering suspicion that I may be accused of making out for the artist a case which no one else than Wagner saw for his own interests, I will quote out of Ed. v. Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (English translation) some remarks by Maudesly, who was merely engaged in scientific psychological research. In Hartmann's Appendix, entitled *Physiology of*

\* Vol. ii., p. 155.

† Vol. ii., p. 337.

*the Nerve-centres*, p. 255 of vol. iii., we read, *inter alia*:

“When the individual brain is a well-constituted one, and has been duly cultivated, the results of its latent activity rising into consciousness suddenly sometimes seem like intuitions; they are strange and startling as the products of a dream oftentimes are to the person who has actually produced them. . . . The best thoughts of an author are always the unwilled thoughts, which surprise himself; and the poet under the inspiration of creative activity is, so far as consciousness is concerned, being dictated to. If we reflect, we shall still see that it must be so; the products of creative activity, in so far as they transcend the hitherto experienced, are unknown to the creator himself before they come forth, and therefore cannot be the result of a definite act of his will; for to an act of will, a conception of the result is necessary.” [The reader must remember that it is Maudesly who is speaking, not Hartmann or Schopenhauer; and will means conscious volition, in this case.] . . . “Therefore it comes to pass at times, that in the investigations of a new order of events by an intellect which is in genial sympathy with nature, the law of their explicitness declares itself as by a flash of intuition after comparatively few observations. The imagination successfully anticipates the slow results of patient and systematic research, flooding the darkness with the light of a true interpretation, and thus illuminating the obscure relations and intricate connections. Therein a

well-endowed and well-cultivated mind manifests its unconscious harmony with nature. The brightest flashes of genius come unconsciously and without effort; growth is not a voluntary act, although the gathering of food is. . . . Rules and systems are necessary for the ordinary endowed mortal, whose business it is to gather and arrange the materials; the genius, who is the architect, has, like nature, an unconscious system of his own. It is the fate of its nature, and no de-merit, that the caterpillar must crawl; it is the fate of its nature, and no merit, that the butterfly must fly.

And now, just before we proceed to consider the butterfly Wagner in his crawling capacity as caterpillar, searching among the elements of society and life, and arranging the material which fits the healthy organisation of the Drama, one more quotation to show that others than Wagner and Wagnerians regard the inspirations of the genius as apart from the laws of ordinary mortals:

"It is hardly a paradox to say that Art is legitimate only when it does not obey laws."\*

Must not his views of the artist, then, as critic, searching for material for the Drama, among human affairs, which are subject to purely conventional laws, be taken in the above sense? Again,

\* R. Moulton, *Shakespeare as Dramatic Artist*, pp. 33, 34.

then, I assert that, regarding Wagner's *Prose Writings*, they must be considered as a self-questioning—how are the conflicting affairs of man in history, as known to us by history, fitted to supply material “stuff” for the highest form of Art—namely, the Drama? If this is not regarded, then what is written about Wagner's prose will bear as much relationship to him, and throw as much light on what he sought to throw light on, as we have obtained from the attitude of the writer of the *Fortnightly* article.

Summed up, then, we find that the philosophic mind regards opposites as the complements of a whole, and its ideas of morality regard this whole in relation to a concept of pure reason; the judicial mind regards opposites according to a given law, whose justice lies alone in what, for the time being, is considered practical; the artist regards opposites as no equal balancing of forces; a relative moral deficiency exists in one—*il y a toujours l'un qui aime et l'autre qui est aimé*. There is a flaw in the moral relationship, and in its widest significance it is the tragic artist's business to set this before us. In its narrowest, this work falls to the lot of the comedy- or burlesque-writer.

The very titles of Wagner's prose works ought to arrest the attention, and afford proof that we have to do with a man who knew better than to attempt throwing a picture on a screenless background. So instinctive was his dramatic bent—that bent, namely, which feels the relativity of life, and knows the futility of doing justice to the "idea" of the one relation without equal justice being done to the other—that the titles in themselves mostly fulfil this preliminary obligation. It is either "*Art and Revolution*" or "*Opera and Drama*," or "*Art and Climate*" or "*State and Religion*," or "*German Art and German Policy*" or "*Religion and Art*." Throughout these writings Wagner scarcely ever departs from the consistent principle of questioning how human affairs provide fitting material for the most comprehensive Art-work—namely, the Drama; or, again, how the poetic aim is to be conspicuously exhibited by a representation of our modern life in such a way that it stimulates the latent artistic mood pervading the leisure of an otherwise busy life. All Art, we have seen, is the individual seeking to find himself again in nature, and for this purpose the Art which responds to this search must arise

from, and be imbued with, the spirit of its own age. It is not possible to impose as Art on a present what responded to the character of a bygone age, and at one and the same time look for sympathetic correspondence and communion between people and artist. For Art is no imposition, and no task. It is in the highest sense entertainment; man at play; man not engaged in dealing, nor searching for bare justice. It is natural expression, an expansion from the feelings within, of previously converging rays from without. It is the fire in the coal, which once, as a primeval forest, was open to the sun. It must forth, and becomes the focussed character of the many by the genius of the one. We sit warming ourselves around the genius as we sit warming ourselves round the fire.

As the artistic nature of Europe awakened, the laws and conditions of the ancient Greek artistic spirit became known by the agency of learning, and aroused such a scholarly interest that the struggling, unconscious endeavour to give birth to the form of Art which responded to the romantic spirit of the age was continuously reminded by scholars that it must obey the laws of those

whose sublime artistic nature gave them the right to be considered lawgivers in this respect. The Greek age, however, had been classic and conservative in its Art, and this was made possible for it by the nature of its State and its ideal. Its most perfect attainment in Art was the sculptured reproduction of the human body, the perfected beauty of the human form its leading ideal. Thus the Grecian ideal tended towards a physical perfection, and its State was not engaged in interfering with ideals which lowered physical perfection in favour of an alien metaphysical ideal. It was a conservative and classic Art, where any poetic tendency towards romance received its correction in satire such as that of Aristophanes.

With the awakening artistic impulse of the Christian era, another spirit had taken possession of this new age. The ideals went out beyond that of physical perfection, and the natural bent of man was thus confronted by a religious doctrine which at every step seemed to deny what had been the very conditions for the perfect art of the Greeks. If the matter could be compressed into one question, all Wagner's writings seem to ask, How could art become Christian?

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At first this was sought for by Wagner without any thorough comprehension of the part Christianity plays in the moral philosophy of the conflict which history discloses. Wagner thus, at first only, asked, How could an ideal which drew men away from the spirit, which was shown to have inspired the art of the Greeks, become itself a subject of Art? There was a rivalry between the disintegrating, lawless art of romance and the corporate classical art, which, having belonged to another age, must now, in virtue of its imposition, be in relation to modern and romantic requirements a pseudo-art, for the good and sufficient reason that it was not born of the spirit of the romantic age, and Art must be born of its own age. This rivalry received its highest exemplification in the dramas of Racine on the one hand, and Shakespeare on the other. In the latter the supreme excellence of the lawless was only gained, however, at the expense of a fundamental principle of Art, needing re-establishment in conformity with the romantic spirit which now possessed the age; the other, again, the French classical Drama, was only gained at the expense of this very romantic spirit itself, and to



the age its appeal could not be Art, but at the best an imitation of a past Art.

We have now to consider two things, which the Drama had to free itself from, if ever it was to become complete enough to effect its purpose by appealing solely to the feelings of an audience. These are the appeal to the understanding and the appeal to the phantasy. The former belongs to the scholar, to the literary drama, and to the novel; the other is the great secret of the success of the preacher dealing in abstractions. Wagner says (vol. ii., p. 210):

“Now, an action which is to justify itself before and through the feeling, busies itself with no moral; its whole moral consists precisely in its justification by the instinctive human feeling. . . . However, no action of Life stands solitary and apart; it has always some sort of correlation with the actions of other men.”

The two things, then, by means of which, and to which, Art does not appeal, are the understanding and the phantasy. Shakespeare gained his end by disregarding certain theories about unity, with which it was not in the nature of romantic Art to concern itself. Understanding belongs to scholarship, and this denial of the nature of Art as an appeal to

man's scholarship in preference to his feelings will be openly disputed by no one. The scholar can grow into a pedant, the artist never. The scholar, as such already in his legitimate capacity, directs his mind consciously to thought ; the artist as such is primarily the plaything of the feelings.

Shakespeare broke up the unity of the Drama, not consciously, but because his unconscious ends could not have been accomplished otherwise. He was forced, however, to appeal to the phantasy of his audience by hanging a board out, which gave information regarding a supposed scene. Phantasy and supposition go together. This appeal to supposition declares somewhere a deficiency in the art of Drama. How, then, is modern Art, holding to Shakespeare, and disregarding Racine, to fill up all gaps in the Art-work, so that the Drama will not have recourse to such aids as the understanding and the phantasy, which do otherwise than appeal to the feelings? How, if we have once admitted that the impulse to appreciate Art is only harassed by appealing to the understanding, are we to get rid of the equally as illegitimate exercise of the imagination or phantasy, to supply the deficiency which

stands self-confessed by Shakespeare's blackboard. Certainly it cannot be done by going back to the French drama. It is not too much to say that Wagner fills in this conspicuous gap by his claim to make the appeal to the feelings complete, in virtue of the combined Arts in their respective spheres supporting the dramatic or poetic aim. We want no explanation of what Art *means* while the Art-work is being acted, because that acted explanation consists exactly in reproducing to our feelings what Art *is*. Then, as far as *meaning* goes, Art means just what life *means*, Art *teaches* what life *teaches*, whatever that is.

The meek, unresisting Christian spirit got overlaid by the romantic spirit of adventure, and the crusades gave rise to innumerable recitals of exploits which appeared to be undertaken in the cause of the ideal of Christianity, while in reality they were in the cause of the mixed ideal of romance.

Action being the nature of life, how was a religion in this case to provide the material for dramatic stage-acting when the example of that religion, at the very point where action is most justified, namely at the point of danger to life, quietly submitted itself to the very power, namely

the power of the State, which with the Greeks had been the protector of the classic conservatism of the Drama? It is to be hoped the reader sees the dilemma in a Christian age for dramatic Art. Consider the case as set by the example of Socrates. The age we now have to deal with is possessed of the general idea of dissatisfaction with existing restrictions. And the artistic bent was finding its expression in all sorts of intrigues and adventure, animated by its own desire to distribute for all the freedom possessed formerly by the few, and logically irrefutable in its assumption that no moral conduct could agree with the ethics of Christianity without progressing towards equality, on which ideal, law must now be built. This administration, any one can see, meant, not the revival of and grubbing for obsolete laws, but the continued upheaval of existing, since law, according to the Christian ideal, only begins where it is self-applied, and ends where a coercive State applies it. And now the imposition of certain laws, which were in direct conflict with the romantic spirit, was vested in the modern State, while in the classical age the law was accepted as the protector of the accepted spirit.

What a difference between Socrates and Christ ! One excusing his own natural bent to live opposed to the urgent solicitation of his friends, and justifying his submission in order to avoid offering an example of incitement to revolt, as if revolt or its incitement was something unnatural and immoral, for which no cause previously existed in the imposition of law which interfered with the natural bent of man. The other, Christ, for whom no exercise of power was too great if he chose, standing silent before his accusers, without one word of excuse for them, having predicted how he would bring about revolt, and set father against son—praying, however, for those who, in turning evidence into accusation and justice into murder, knew not, in their blindness, what they did. What could a romantic Art have to do with submission, which sought its laws from a period where a State gave it its law ? Surely the idea of liberty could only be represented by the Art, born of the same age, as demanded liberty. So the free, striving artist in the romantic age either had to hamper himself with a theory of a past age out of harmony with his ideals, or else, like all the rest, make his theory follow after the realisation of his own

instinctive bent towards freedom. How, then, was material for the most comprehensive Art-work, where all recourse to understanding or phantasy was obviated, to be drawn from examples of life where the spirit of the age was exhibited in conflict with authority—or, when not in conflict, in submission to a State which gave it its laws? A Louis XIV. was to set the law, or express the desire, which the genius of his country was to follow, and out of this age a hero was to be found for Drama who submitted to such direction! How could he be a hero in an age of romance, and at the same time submit?

If one understands the essential satire of comedy, such topsyturvyness is quite possible as material for satire on existing customs; but every one who thinks will see at the same time that the tragic situation of an Art run on these lines possessed a poetic significance which was not indeed new. Such an Art has always portrayed the good genius of mankind in conflict with the tyrannous deities of the imagination. Louis XIV., who must have his very shirt first handed him through the hands of some dozen noble servants—he, with his "*L'état c'est moi*"—is not quite a fitting

hero for the subject of tragedy. The mirroring of this or any other particular age, this or any other particular court, these particular mannerisms, would confine a universal picture to a narrow frame. One could understand the frame going into the picture, without ever taking any notice of a special Louis or other historical personage; but never could the great life-picture go into such a frame. For all *à priori* State imposition was interference with the revolting romantic and heroic spirit. The dissatisfied thrusting bent of romance and the poetical tragic significance, as it had been handed down in legends, also showed the reverse side of the picture so far as heroism was concerned. Hercules and Prometheus fought against, and not in, the service of that sheet-anchor of statecraft diplomacy—namely, a “god.” The muse of romance was not inclined to sit at the feet of courtly direction or priestcraft. Christ had solved the question so far by showing that it was the fate of the spirit of humanity to make no resistance. But was this enough for the manly spirit which sought equality? Art was compelled to conform, since it sprang not only from the relatively lawless, but more so from the

spirit making a law for itself; and thus, so far as Dramatic Art was concerned, it was at a loss to know what to do with a revolutionary spirit such as Christ's, which succumbed instead of resisting. Art was then captured by the State and the priests. But in two instances this capture was not complete. Just as the perfect physical ideal of Greek Art had its refuge in sculpture, so the ideal spiritual Art of Christianity had its refuge in painting. Christ on the Cross was always a subject which inspired the artistic genius of the age. The other instance was music.

It is here that Wagner draws closest the lines of his lucid but profound inquiry concerning the relation of Religion to Art. From *Art and Revolution* to *Religion and Art*, from 1850 to 1880, this idea pervades his writings—namely, how an age of revolution and romance in conflict with its own authority can provide material for the highest or, rather, for the most comprehensive Art-work. Those who read Wagner with due respect will easily understand how the subject-matter must have recourse to myth, where the nature of the conflict essential to drama retains its pristine purity. And thus the Art of Greece must remain



for us the model ; for, so far as we are concerned, it is not even the Grecian ideal which pervades this sordid age, but the Jewish. It is always "God," day in, day out, a materialised conception of coercive threatening egoism. We do not care how much Church and State have adopted the mere name of Christ. It is deeds, and not names, with which the Drama has to do. So Wagner shows that the artistic representation of "God," in even its most acceptable form to the humane spirit, as a grey-bearded old man haunting a garden, or in a fiery bush, could not arrest the feeling of the romantic age, while, on the other hand, the picture of Christ has always been a source of profound interest. What this means for Art is of the greatest significance, for, as shown, the subject which appeals to men's feelings alone, not to their understanding, not to their reflective bent of mind or their imagination and phantasy, must be humane and sympathetic. State, conventional laws, and coercion, consisting of an inveterate antipathy to the spirit of the age, must be represented as morally inferior to that which, in its romanticism, possesses the Divine spirit of freedom—in comedy as conscious satire, in tragedy as unconscious fate.

How music, in its dramatic perfectedness, reclaims the shortcomings of Shakesperian drama, in conjunction with the other Arts, and how this exclusive product of the Christian era developed to its perfection in Beethoven apart from and in spite of Church and State, which, as usual, was deeply interested in hedging it in with its everlasting theories and laws, belongs, in conjunction with the parallel exposition of the true source of the spirit of humanity, to Wagner's latest writings.

If our State and Church worship has any ideal to speak of at all, then it is summed up in the word "justice." But justice is no subject for Art. The refund of a debt which cannot be traced to or laid at the door of mankind so long as a supernatural deity is posited involves a contradiction in terms. If you make an infinite "God" superior to man (why should not man himself be infinite?), then out of your own mouth your justification of this God's power is bound to be produced. He will need to take over all the responsibilities of this superiority if you so kindly invest him with the needed capacity. But what pervades all Wagner's Art, and, indeed, all Art, is not this bare re-establishment of justice. It is

mercy. The offended (Jewish) Deity who, after all, must be responsible for the world, has to be replaced, or rather in Wagner's *Ring* replaces himself voluntarily by a Deity of Mercy born of love for his own kith and kin. What says Blake :—

Mutual forgiveness of each vice,  
 Such are the gates of Paradise  
 Against the accuser's chief desire,  
 Who walked among the stones of fire.  
 Jehovah's fingers wrote the Law ;  
 He wept, then rose in zeal and awe,  
 And, in the midst of Sinai's heat,  
 Hid it beneath His mercy-seat.  
 O Christians ! Christians ! tell me why  
 You rear it on your altars high !

That, we see, is all mercy, and not justice.

It is the recognition that the fate of the *noblesse* of the ideal of mankind is to *oblige*, and not to reign, as opposed to a moon-struck subjection to a deity of whom the best that can be said is that he delivers or seeks justice. Then let him be just to himself, and let us do as Feuerbach suggests—leave God to sacrifice himself to Love. In Wagner's early days it was Hercules, Prometheus,

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Antigone, Christ, Siegfried, Brünnhilde, who presented themselves to him as the types of this Divine feeling of Mercy, or *Mit-leid*, "with one's own." These were in conflict with "God"—*i.e.* conventional laws, and not humane laws—only Christ was not yet recognised by Wagner in his own right as the silent pitier, and not the defier, of an authority without which this world could not be known at all, because Wagner's ideal was always gloriously bound up, as with the Greeks, with the beautiful form of Apollo.

In the *Ring*, again, it was not alone a semi-divinity struggling for mankind oppressed by its own deities, but an altogether more artistic and profounder conception—namely, the "God"\* in conflict with himself, divided between his "office" and his "love." With the grasp, however, of the Kantian and Schopenhauerian philosophy, even the ideal of perfected human form had to give way; and then the drama of mercy or of *Mit-leid*, the ancient idea of the Divine, supplemented by the Christian, acting in the interests of mankind, and in sympathy with them, could be

\* That is, simply a human being elevated into an authority, whose morality is based on tradition and custom.

portrayed in all its enthralling significance. Such is the drama of *Parsifal*.

In face of the supreme poetry of this inspiration, pervading all Wagner's works, does any one seriously believe that the exoteric Jewish deity so hugged by orthodoxy and vaunted in his capacity as Judge—nothing better or more poetical, or more humane, than your grocer or your Shylock, giving you your exact pound of sugar or flesh for your  $3\frac{1}{4}d.$  or your bond—is to hold in its hands the privilege of perpetrating injustice without challenge, or to find itself awaiting some genius who is to give it artistic form so easily, as Wagner has done the “purely human” in his sublime *Ring*?

If people do not understand Wagner the magnificent poet of humanity, they can never understand his writings and his aims. No wonder they want to make a mere musician out of him.

## II.

### *THE ANTI-WAGNERIAN OF THE PAST.*

THE peasant who waits quietly till the river has flowed by before he crosses over has a claim on our forbearance ; but when his voice is heard clamouring as an alarmist, that self-same peasant steps back into deeper and more dangerous water than ever there was to fear, had he boldly and quietly faced the river. Such a man Mr. Joseph Bennett has reproachfully spoken of in the *Musical Times* of March 1898. There says he :

“The croaker seems to be a necessary part in the organisation of society, and he is seldom remiss in the discharge of his duty.”

How much he could venture to be remiss and yet keep up his unenviable character Mr. Bennett does not attempt to describe in words. Among the multifarious croakers who have their claims on society, save us from that one who, undertaking

to alarm people of the danger of crossing the river, adds to his monitorship, firstly a protectorate over ancient cobwebs, and secondly, what is much more heinous, exclusive ownership in the perennial. The dire disasters threatening us which haunt the brain of the croaker have to be proved existing apart from the mind of the individual entertaining them, and it is in the search for this proof that something comes to light which shows us the gulf between the theoriser and the worker, between the man in the study and the active man in the theatre of life. Compare, for instance, any well-known conductor of an orchestra and the leading anti-Wagnerian of the time. Watch the one and his enthusiasm. Ask what is the croaking complaint of the other. Let Mr. Joseph Bennett himself formulate the main charge for the latter.

“ My charge against the musical-image breaker is that he deprecates the composer of the past and limits his regard to the music of the present. . . . But there is no blinking the fact that Wagner set in motion the ball now directed to the crushing of all music save his own and that in which his influence is paramount. . . . It is hardly too much to say that at one time the free lances of Wagnerian controversy endeavoured to set up a condition of terrorism. Ubiquitous and unscrupulous,

they sought to gag every mouth that even mildly argued against their creed."

Well! who takes that on trust, without proof? So much, at present, to denote the complaint, and the position, of the anti-Wagnerian of the past; now it remains to be seen whether this is not truly the voice of Mr. Bennett's own croaker who, as he says, is seldom remiss in the discharge of his duty. Now, if Mr. Bennett's words clearly make plain what the anti-Wagnerian's complaint is, it is at least my duty to make clear, before going any further, what a Wagnerian's duty is, or at least as much as is necessary for the purposes of this essay. That has to divide itself into two parts, in order to meet two divisions of the anti-Wagnerian party. The division treated of now is an almost superannuated quantity. Its distinctive mark is to deprecate Wagner the musician, and Wagner's influence on music. Further, in non-comprehension of Wagner, it does not go—at least, intentionally. Were it challenged by the other Wagnerian, the one whom, we saw in the former essay, is called on to oppose the anti-Wagnerian of the present; had it to listen to all that is advanced by that enthusiast with regard to Wagner as a great dramatist, as



an unapproachable Art critic, as the most acute and penetrative mind of the century, the permanent smile of incredulity, already aroused at the simple claims of the musician, would settle into a look of blank despair ; and when the party, or, let us say, its champion, got back into the recesses of his study, he would take down books to see what on earth such a thing as a dramatist was—how any criticism of Art was possibly left over after the multitudinous works already produced on the subject, including his own ; and how a mind could in any sense be called penetrative that never penetrated so far as to occupy a chair in a university, or a pulpit in a church.

Well, then, Mr. Bennett has told us that croakers exist, and are seldom remiss in the discharge of their duty, so no difficulty should surely remain in laying our hands on the croaker. His very want of remissness, that is his positive energy, should make it an easy task. But will he agree with us if the anti-Wagnerian himself is demonstrated the prince of croakers ? He may not object to the word, but to its application. A word is always capable of being defined and analysed, but the mission of even the croaker cannot be quite explained away. So if

I were to designate a Wagnerian before all things as a missionary, I reserve to myself the same right of repudiating any other construction put on the term than I put myself. Now I am ready to show exactly what I mean by the word "missionary," and take over all responsibilities connected with the discharge of that worthy's duties, according to my definition. A Wagnerian missionary has this distinctive mark, which renders him a novel and interesting kind of missionary. He does not proceed by way of croaking. The anti-Wagnerian doubtless laments that the works of the great past masters in music are falling into neglect and decay, but, while he croaks, forward steps the blithe Wagnerian and conducts them better than ever. Again, take this as an instance: Mr. Bennett can go to a concert and hear Saint-Saen's *Danse Macabre*, wedged in between a Mozart symphony and a Beethoven overture, and come away lamenting over the degeneracy of Art which permits of such a thing as a *Danse Macabre* at all. So he makes it an easy thing for the Wagnerian to show superiority by his offering up thanksgiving for being provided with the frequent opportunity of hearing Beethoven and Mozart, although it may

be admitted for our country much more of Mozart should be heard. But look at that Wagnerian stronghold, Munich ; is it not setting the example in this direction ? Again, at the Promenade Concerts of the day, the Wagnerian is grateful for the wonderful transformation which has come over that fine British institution since it left the fashionable and gilded halls of Covent Garden, with its buffets, and its pleasure-seekers of the Venusberg type. There, in those palmy days which Mr. Bennett regrets, the *demi-monde* joined hands and sang reverently, in their fashion, the strains of the Handelian chorus, "For all we like sheep have gone astray," when the programme, in including it, suited their taste and attracted their presence. Why does not Wagner attract them now ? Are they, then, anti-Wagnerians, as well ? What we see now, and listen to with pleasure, in the Queen's Hall, has long been known in Germany, and much more can be learnt from that country in the way of altering for the better our musical entertainments—Mozart opera as performed at Munich, for instance. But Fashion bars the way in our country, and progress means hard work, minus Fashion. What has been effected in the

Concert Hall may be effected in the Opera House some day, if the fashionable element there will only yield with as good a grace as the *demi-monde* have yielded in the Promenade Concerts. Thus the object of the Wagnerian is not to oppose anything the anti-Wagnerian claims by word of mouth, but just to continue taking the wind out of his sails. Mr. Bennett laments the degeneracy of music. The Wagnerian is setting that right for him. When one considers the numerous fields on which this little business of taking the wind out of people's sails can be put into operation it will be easily seen that Wagnerian missionaries have their work cut out for them at home for a long time. They have no intention of conducting operations in China, or India, or South Africa. Anti-Wagnerians do not exist there, thank the Lord. Charity begins at home, but charity is not restricted alone to conducting and instilling into the public better music.

The Wagnerian wants to demonstrate simply that talk is not action, and abuse is not argument, and so far as common-sense enters into mere words, he, the Wagnerian, has just as much claim, *à priori*, to such a virtue as the other, and a little

more if action is behind his talk, and is considered more valuable than words. The aimless abstraction of this talk, even in the form of sublime poetry and sonnets, is an amusing thing to listen to. Who do you think, of all people in the world, wrote the following?

“Sublimest genius in a vicious age  
 Of mean intrigue and persecution’s art,  
 By those devised who knew thee one apart  
 From fawning slaves, and all their jealous rage  
 To drive thee from our England did engage.  
 The mocking laughter of the world pursues  
 Thy baffled foes across the historic page.  
 But oh ! great master of *dramatic* Art,  
 What full reward is thine as stillness falls  
 On reverent crowds who hear thy lofty strains,  
 While God-like harmonies the earth disdains,  
 And ’mid the cloud-peaks each to other calls  
 With thunderous ‘Hallelujah’ that full fain  
 Would break upon the throne in Heaven’s high halls.’

There is just one word changed in this, and that is denoted by italics. Well, now, this sonnet appeared in the *Musical Times* at the very time a biography of Wagner was appearing; and a quotation from that biography shall show how easy a thing it is at one and the same time to

lament the degeneracy of an age which could venture to oppose Handel two hundred years ago—for Handel's was the genius which inspired these lines—and in the present contribute "mean intrigue and persecution's art" to another genius who is as certain to a warm corner in the human heart as Handel worthily has earned. Of course, what I mean by the art of intrigue and persecution is just that particular line of abuse which falls within the reach of this or that particular individual. We all have our own little fields to work in. A well-paid critic, with a study to write from, and several papers to write for, can do little more than sling ink. So when a writer—if I remember right, in the *Graphic*—directed, in order to practise his peculiar art of persecution against Wagner, the line, "'The creature's at his dirty work again,'" he has, to all intents and purposes, added his contribution to that Art which should be pursued by the mocking laughter of the world. At least, that is Mr. Bennett's opinion, so far as Handel and his traducers are concerned. For no one else is author of both sonnet and biography. But what a difference in the tone! He may, and evidently does, think—if he thinks at all, which seems doubtful

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—that what was then a disreputable and shameful practice in others is now fair and praiseworthy in himself. No wonder his ideas of degeneracy are a bit out of date. Who was the quoter of that line in the *Graphic*? I do not know, but it was all of a piece with the treatment Wagner has received from those who were not in sympathy with his work in England. Anti-Wagnerianism is just one lengthy croaking protest, owing to the susceptibilities of the pampered critics. When Henry Chorley, the celebrated critic of the *Athenæum*, heard *Tannhäuser* in Weimar, he was blanked and insulted :

“I shall hardly be able to represent my impressions without appearing to those who have not suffered under this extraordinary opera, in the light of one indulging in hyperbole” [one would have thought it was the flowing bowl] “and caricature, for in truth I have never been so blanked, pained, wearied, insulted—the word is not too strong” [not at all too strong ; it just the more exposes you] “by a work of pretension as by this same *Tannhäuser*.”

It was then, as now, at that point where Wagner's original work begins to assert itself that the critic got insulted. Otherwise, some justice was done to him for his good work in the interests of others.

The *Times* said of Wagner's conducting a symphony by a Mr. Potter at the Philharmonic concerts of 1855 :

"Wagner conducted the performance with evident good will."

And of Macfarren's overture to *Cherry Chase* :

"Herr Wagner, to his credit be it said, took as much pains with it as he did with Mr. Potter's Symphony at the 6th concert."

And, summing up the series of concerts :

"A good deal may be learned in the course of eight concerts, and there was quite enough in the execution of the symphonies and overtures to show that Herr Wagner is a man of intelligence and firmness, and an original, perhaps an intellectual thinker."

How much have the anti-Wagnerian party advanced on these lines? Not a bit. Look at Wagner as they like—as musician, thinker, or art critic, we shall find that at present what the *Times* said of his overture to *Tannhäuser* denotes much more the real view they take of him :

"The almost impossible overture of R. Wagner, introduced for the first time to an English audience, and



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played with surprising accuracy and decision, would do very well for a pantomime or Easter piece. It is a weak parody of the worst composition, not of M. Berlioz, but of his imitators. So much fuss about nothing, such a pompous and empty commonplace, has seldom been heard."

That reads just like Mr. Newman on Wagner's Prose. And again :

"With the utmost deference for the opinion of Modern Germany, we are compelled to adhere to our first opinion that the overture to *Tannhäuser* is a piece of vapid rhodomantade, and that, as Herr Wagner paints him, the 'Minstrel of love' is, after all, but a clamorous and empty personage."

The anti-Wagnerian nowadays, however, writes of Wagner in this strain without even a pretence of "the utmost deference." In fact, the real genius of the man has only to become known, no matter in which line, to stir up in the critic the same sentiments as were stirred in Chorley and the *Times* critic by this same *Tannhäuser*. So what I am going to quote from the Wagner biography, which filled certain pages of the *Musical Times* during the years 1890 and 1891, is just a piece in the whole art of persecution, which, as in Handel's

case, arises from the original genius, whom the world, apart from the critic, is always ready to honour, thrusting himself between it and the blessed critic.

In a letter, Wagner had asked Liszt, who, knowing what he was capable of, helped him all along, as one true friend helps another, to procure such funds as would ensure him the necessary peace and comfort to compose the great work he had in his mind. For this he declared himself ready to give security in future royalties, not to speak of the value of the work itself when finished, although all this was unnecessary to a man who knew Wagner as Liszt knew him. Liszt, of course, did what he could—a no unusual occurrence in this world so far as the granting of patronage is concerned. Some men would hesitate to mix themselves up in reproaching another for his kindly acts towards a man in such straits as Wagner was in ; but not your anti-Wagnerian. His gratuitous advice is just anti-Wagnerian ; that is the worst that is to be said of it. He wades into the very mire that other people would shrink from if it touched the soles of their boots. Mr. Bennett's advice was :

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“He (Liszt) should have taken the writer by the collar and given him a good shaking till the nonsense” [the *Ring* (?)] “flew off him like water from a well-twirled mop.”

Certainly this advice was tendered in 1890. Wagner died in 1883, and Liszt in 1886. I wonder what Liszt would have said to Mr. Bennett if it had been tendered *in propria persona*. Probably something like this, “My dear sir,—go and compose some more sonnets on the persecution offered to the genius two hundred years before, and leave me to help along the genius of the day who suffers by persecution.” You see, Liszt was a Wagnerian, and Mr. Bennett is an anti-Wagnerian, and that says a lot by itself. Wagner and Liszt were two travellers who walked this earthly vale as friends. Travellers who squabble are fittingly reproachful objects, when a peaceable ass is brought into the picture to point a useful moral. I know of such a little fable about two travellers who fought for the shadow of an ass which was grazing peaceably beside them. Surely as useful a moral could be drawn from such a sight as that of an ass kicking up its heels while the two travellers were engaged in friendly intercourse.

Now towards the end of this biography Mr. Bennett gives another instance of how, with his advice, he is wide astray in putting his finger on what is contemptible in man. It is in noticing the liking for wearing coloured silk dressing-gowns, which was a domestic and only domestic weakness. He devotes a large amount of space to this circumstance, and adds :

“It would be easy to continue remarks in the style of the foregoing, since, of all human weaknesses, a love for finery is, in a man, the most contemptible.”

Then it is to be feared all love for Art is contemptible, for Art is just “finery.” But Mr. Bennett is very wide of the mark. I can tell him of a weakness much more contemptible than that, but I do not think I would undertake it were it not that that sonnet on Handel, shows that Mr. Bennett considers “mean intrigue and persecutions art” still more contemptible. Why mean intrigue and all the rest of it is mean intrigue for Handel and honest criticism for Wagner I do not profess to be able to understand. So that between Mr. Bennett’s principle and its universal practice there only stands Wagner. Even as late

as 1898, Mr. Bennett has taken upon him the task of warning this depraved age of the danger threatened by the ball Wagner set a-rolling. In the *Musical Times* of June he still finds comfort in the fact that music in its present state is a passing madness, although now he is forced to relegate the period of restoration to such a dim and distant future that many of us are not fated to live and welcome the Muse clothed again, and in her right mind—as he puts it. A poor comfort indeed by itself; but it can be helped along—he tells us—and the day of salvation brought closer, by making people aware of the existing degradation, and imbuing them with a sense of danger. Wisdom, lifting up Her Voice in the Market Place, tells us by her accredited agent, Mr. Joseph Bennett, that the Law of Change which governs Evil as well as Good, the Tide which Ebbs as well as Flows—the sooner these move in the right direction, the sooner will the generation to come be able to welcome the return to a healthy state of affairs.

“My preaching is vain of immediate effect, I know. . . . This explains why I return again and again to the vital matter of present-day tendencies and bid all whose ears

my voice can reach to reflect upon the growing degeneration of taste and neglect of the high principle of Art.”\*

We all know a great deal about the High Principle of Art, but it caused a smile when I read all this, for I was very much concerned to know whether this Law of Change was going to penetrate as far as the consciences and methods of those who profoundly smitten with grief at the present degradation, have their own senses so benumbed that its application to themselves, when Wagner is the object of their wrath, is often left out of account. And here it is I feel I can help Mr. Joseph Bennett to the ends he has in view. No man could write so beautifully and with such evident sincerity as he writes without being susceptible to this Law of Change, if only it can be guided so as to touch him on the right spot at the right time. We are suffering from an Unhealthy Appetite, the Inevitable Result of our Modern Life. Dear, dear! These words are Mr. Bennett's own, but the capitals are mine, because I am convinced of their abstract truth just as much as he is; and indeed, since that was Wagner's opinion all along, I want to speak

\* *The Musical Times*, June 1898.

them out louder than Mr. Bennett. Hence these capitals. Mr. Bennett laments that his preaching is vain of immediate effect. He undoubtedly scores a profound truth in that lament. I can show how it is possible for him to preach with immediate effect. One of the minor secret means towards successfully redeeming the world from its errors is to have some sense of proportion. In the first place, it is indifference which is the sign of decay, and no one will accuse this age of a growing indifference to music. Another minor secret means (I am reserving the great secret for the last) is to distinguish between the use of mere abstract language of both praise and reproach, and the use of those well-defined charges which in applying only to the object to which they are intended to apply, cannot recoil on one's own head. The sonnet quoted, and the capitals, are good enough instances, but I must return to the biography in the *Musical Times* again to show how the anti-Wagnerian can indulge in language which, with here and there a slight alteration, reads just as pointed a lesson to its employer as it does to those against whom it was directed. I take a paragraph or two from the last chapter of the

said biography, and, by altering some words; replacing Wagner's name by an imaginary critic's, the word artist by critic; exchanging certain qualities of the genius which do not tally with those of the critic by words that do tally—for instance, the word "pride," which was used as a reproach against Wagner, or the word "character," by the word "criticism," which now serves as a reproach against the critic; and again, by replacing a plural by a singular,—I leave the reader to judge, when all is said and done, whether Wagner or the Wagnerian suffers so much as the critic and anti-Wagnerian himself. Our selection begins: \*

"Hardly one of the many observers of — career would venture to deny that the most conspicuous feature in his *criticisms* was a measure of *inability to discriminate*, so prodigious as to be almost without parallel. The *failure* of that quality in the events of his life is seen, even by the most casual student, to be singularly comprehensive and powerful. It is by no means uncommon for men, whom nature has endowed with the *critical* temperament, to evince extreme sensitiveness in the face of criticism. They are quick to feel, which is an inevitable attendant upon that

\* All the altered words are in italics.



endowment; and some of them are quick to resent, which is simply an infirmity of temper. But in the case of — we find a complete identity established between the man and his work, so that to touch the one was to touch the other. — was quite aware of this, and sought—not for the first time—to shelter a personal failing under the *want of discrimination*. It has been said of many men, from Mahomet to Joe Smith, who sought to thrive upon the passion *for scandal*, that they generally contrived to get a ‘revelation’ suited to the desire of the moment. — was not insensible to the advantages of an analogous process, and, being by nature ‘touchy,’ he *forgot* the inseparableness of the man and his *criticism*. Under cover of this *forgetfulness* he could give full play to his egoism, and treat *an* opponent of his artistic principles as an enemy *to pure music*. He could also regard *personal taste*, which, strictly speaking, concerned only himself, as of critical moment. He exercised both these potentialities, as we have seen. A ‘*Life of Wagner*,’ in the — —, was an attempt to maintain a position where *demands of journalism* might take the form of benefits to himself. *Other articles* were the products of personal resentment. *Others, again, were* savage outbursts over the *pending collapse* of a *new movement, which, in part, showed a contempt for journalism*. In these, and most other cases connected with the militant —, very little examination serves to make clear that the moving cause was not so much consideration for *truth* as for personal feeling. It was ‘I, — —,’ that men

touched when they put their finger upon real or supposed faults in — *criticisms* and practice, and they very soon found hurtling through the air objurgations from a skilful and determined employer of these *critical* missiles.

“It is to this intense personal feeling, this excessive sensibility born of a *careless* and arrogant nature, that the peculiar virulence of *anti-Wagnerian* warfare is due. We can see nothing in the nature of the case from which bitter passion must necessarily proceed. There were *critics* before — who introduced *criticism* and novel points of practice, but in no case did the circumstance divide those interested by it into two hostile camps . . . one . . . thirsting for the blood of the other. . . . The rule has been for all tendencies towards change in Art to excite discussion between the lovers of change and the partisans of *laissez faire*, and discussion proportionate in keenness to the quick feeling which artistic natures possess ; but the extreme personal animosity, we had almost said ferocity, shown in *anti-Wagnerian* warfare, has never to our knowledge been equalled or even approached. It is not unreasonable to assume that this character was given to the warfare, in great measure, at all events, by the exacerbating tongues of the principal *anti-Wagnerians*. — never seems to have restrained the action of his *indiscrimination*, of his *blind* assertiveness, and all that he did by any exercise of the reason which would have told him that the world requires *intuition* to *fathom* novelties, especially new ideas and theories connected

with subjects which *never have been and never will be* settled beyond dispute.

"The world, happily, is not 'blown about by every wind of *criticism*,' and, *unlike* these typical Bereans whom St. Paul commended, it *takes what it finds beautiful on trust*. This attitude is one of absolute self-preservation, and an instinctive attitude to boot. Naturally it vexes and annoys *critics* and *journalists* to whom the *beauty* of what the *artist* produces is not apparent; and thus, when men accept it at first sight, the old vituperative formula, 'Oh, fools and blind!' at once springs to the lip. But this 'ignorant impatience' is utterly unphilosophical, and argues something suspiciously wrong in the mental constitution of those who display it. — undoubtedly possesses *something suspiciously wrong* to a remarkable extent, and what *is* the result? Simply that the obviously healthy in *Wagner's* scheme of operatic reform met with *vituperation* along with that which appeared to be exaggerated and mischievous."

So much to show the hopelessness of mere abstract charges. My point in re-writing Mr. Bennett's abstractions is to show their ineffectiveness. It is no more an effective attack against Wagner than, re-written by me, it is an effective attack on anti-Wagnerianism, provided now the latter, throwing abstractions aside, can produce

something more positive such as Wagner has produced. And this rescript is a far more pungent and effective way of clinching the argument than quoting from the fearful and innumerable instances of abuse with which the anti-Wagnerian kept alive the flame of his heat against Wagner and Wagnerians. I trust sincerely it does not prove an irritating way. I have far too much pity for the anti-Wagnerian to add to his sorrow of disappointment that of irritation. But in case I am fated to add this irritation to their sorrows, if any one can show me an effective way of stopping anti-Wagnerians from inflicting damage on themselves without irritating them, when they are stupid enough to think they are damaging the Wagner cause, then I will certainly adopt it.

It must, however, be said that since Mr. Bennett took the trouble of talking about a "savage outburst," "personal animosity, we had almost said ferocity" (why on earth did you not say it then! Why this sudden fastidiousness?) "personal resentment," and again, in the later number of the *Musical Times* of charging the free lances of Wagnerian controversy with endeavouring "to set up a condition of terrorism—ubiquitous and

unscrupulous, they sought to gag every mouth that even mildly argued against their creed";—in the face of all this it must, I think, be said that it is a pity some attempt was not made to prove it all. When a man goes the distance of making charges, he should be provided with proofs to substantiate them, doubly so when these charges are sheaves of abuse. Now, for my part, in the former essay I felt this obligation of producing proof so strongly that I trust the anti-Wagnerian faction is satisfied that it has been fulfilled. If you do not produce the proof, but limit yourself to accusation, you are justly looked on as unable to produce it. With regard to this "gagging" and this "Reign of Terror," what could an exile like Wagner do, even if he were disposed to put in motion the forces which alone can effect "gagging" and "reigns of terror"? Or, again, how could artistically minded people, who are so little disposed to violence, who have so little to do with that *precious entity* the State, under whom alone it is possible to apply coercion—how could they even seek to gag people's mouths, and endeavour to set up a Reign of Terror? The Press is supposed to be a free institution, and why, if Wagner and

Wagnerians were convinced of the justice of their case, and of the degradation of operatic Art as it culminated in Meyerbeer, should they not be allowed to express their opinions with that courage and resolution which proves sincerity? If Wagner had come forward, hat in hand, and in a whining voice said, "Please, gracious sirs, I have a play with music in my mind, which, I am afraid, is not quite in accordance with the principles on which the operas of Rossini and Meyerbeer are constructed. Nor, please, do I think the kind of theatre you use for these favourite works of your honourable selves is quite the thing for my work. Please may I explain what I think I mean?"—would the Jockey Clubs, etc., have said, "Speak out your mind fearlessly, openly, in the Press"? Our anti-Wagnerians have no objections to prove the wrongness of Wagner and Wagnerians in *presenting* their case by means of the free Press, while they reserve the right to *misrepresent* that case in the servile Press. However, even that resource must fail. The Press is not altogether corrupted and dead to the beauties of Wagner's theories and prose. As to the charges of a "savage outburst" and "personal animosity," we have now

Wagner's *Prose Works* translated into English. Produce from them proof to corroborate your statement. I challenge you. I defy you, and laugh your chances all the time to scorn. This is my humble opinion of Wagner's writings as far as they regard treatment of others. No man in this world, who ever came on to a polemical field with sincere conviction to champion a cause whose theoretical justification was only possible after showing up the shortcomings and falseness of what it opposed, was more scrupulous than Wagner. Honour and respect for those he had to make mention of, a conspicuous desire not to give cause for personal ill-feeling, a careful limitation of his trenchant criticism to matters only where they touch on Art, pervade his writings. The reason for the irritation and subsequent misrepresentation lay in the fact that it is too obviously true. The British public has long been deluded by the falsehoods spread around concerning Wagner's treatment of his fellow-composers. He ignored many certainly.

Things in this world have to be judged relatively, and I do not know of one single instance where personal resentment could be charged to Wagner.

Certainly, possessed of the excitable temperament that he—an artist—had, the disposition to let severe and personal things appear hastily in print should be excusable from psychological reasons ; but even in cases where this excitable temperament might be less likely to be found than in an artist, I think the charge of attributing strongly expressed views to personal resentment should not be hastily indulged in. Schopenhauer's abuse of Hegel, Hegel's treatment of Kant, Kant's slight to Fichte, or Compté's behaviour towards those who provided him with an annuity, are not usually looked on as the outcome of personal resentment. And where was Wagner guilty of such? The anti-Wagnerian cannot see that there was justification sufficient in the conditions to make recourse to mere abuse of individuals quite unnecessary for Wagner. The want of justification in the conditions makes recourse to abuse of Wagner necessary for them. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ*, he is a poor observer of things who does not see that the state of affairs which Wagner attacked, in itself, provided him with a sufficient case, without his having recourse to abusing the plaintiff's counsel.

“It is vain for critics to denounce : their denunciation



recoils on themselves. The sentence of Rymer that the soul of modern Drama was a brutish and not a reasonable soul, or of Voltaire that Shakespeare's Tragedy would not be tolerated by the lowest French mob, can harm no one but Rymer and Voltaire." \*

How would Rymer and Voltaire have welcomed a mission to save them from themselves, such as is now laying its services in my humble person before Mr. Bennett the critic? Would they have been ungrateful? I hope Mr. Bennett will not be so.

So now, having repelled Mr. Bennett's attacks on the present degeneracy of the age, in music, by leaving it to people's judgment to say whether it is not indifference which is the sign of decay; in addition to this maintaining that his error lies in a want of the sense of proportion; and having further shown that the attack on Wagner and Wagnerians on account of their "personal resentment," can neither in the present, nor prospectively, be successful, because they are unsubstantiated charges;—I will proceed to demonstrate the real cause of the failure in the anti-Wagnerian camp, and the reason of its certain decay and eventual collapse. Far be it from me to flatter myself that

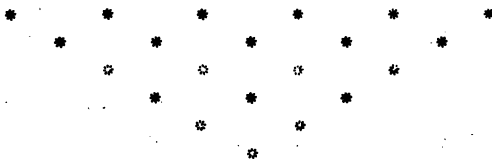
\* Moulton's *Shakespeare as Dramatic Artist*, p. 16—17.

there is anything novel or witty in this advice, about to be gratuitously tendered. Mr. Bennett will not bear me any grudge if I confine myself to his own particular conduct to illustrate the occasion.

And now, since the correction of a *doyen* of criticism by a mere nobody is likely to be at least quite as painful to the latter as we all understand it to be for the father who must chastise his son, the reader will excuse me if I retire, to conceal my emotion, for a brief period, behind some asterisks. It is a doubtful policy, however, for Mr. Bennett, in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 9, 1898, relative to the *Walküre*, says :

“Wotan’s maudlin over the wrongdoer, whom he condemns, cannot be suffered with patience. One longs to kick the schoolmaster who, before wielding the rod, explains that he is going to suffer as much as his victim.”

I wonder, if any one could see behind the curtain of asterisks, would my suffering prompt him to kick me? That would be adding injury to the Wagnerian as well as insult to Wagner.



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The following correspondence appeared in the *Church Times* of June 19 and 26, and July 3.

### WAGNER'S "WALKÜRE."

SIR,—Will you allow me to caution music-loving clergy and laymen, if they have not time to read the libretto of the *Walküre* of Wagner, to think twice before they go to hear it, or see it? The principal scene is, I dare to say it, the most infamous ever put upon any stage in heathen or in Christian times. It consists of a glorification of incest, mingled with adultery, and the betrayal of the commonest rites of hospitality. Siegmund is running off with his host's wife. Before they go, he discovers that she is his sister. He is nothing daunted, but together they chant the edifying refrain, "Sister and bride, bride and sister," to a charming bit of melody, which only the more emphasizes the situation, that it occurs after some fifty pages of (to me) dreary and hysterical recitative. Yet the papers review the performance as though it were a respectable one, and royalty, including our young Princesses, calmly goes to witness what to the pagan mind of Sophocles was an intolerable sin and shame, even if committed, as in 'Œdipus Tyrannus,' unknowingly. 'Tristan and Isolde,' which I hope will not be produced, is a scarcely less horrible glorification of an adulterous connexion, in which all the spectator's sympathies are enlisted on behalf of the guilty parties. *Quousque tandem?*

EDWARD CURLING.

THE VICARAGE, DOWNHAM, CLITHEROE, *June 16.*

## *The anti-Wagnerian of the Past* 197

SIR,—I do not wish to ask you to open your columns to a discussion upon the question of the morality of Wagner, but I hope you will allow me to state that I am sorry to see from Mr. Curling's letter that he is so ready to jump to a conclusion upon apparently so slight a knowledge of the plot of the opera. While fully admitting the boldness of dealing with such a subject as Siegmund's and Sieglinde's love on the stage, I think that such wholesale condemnation is uncalled for (1) because the sin of incest and betrayal of hospitality is expressly condemned in Act II.; indeed, Siegmund has to pay the penalty with his life, and (2) if blame is deserved, the myth itself, not Wagner, is to blame. The Wälsung race (the twin brother and sister) were begotten by Wotan for a certain purpose, and must be perpetuated by their marriage—I am not at pains to defend the myth, Wagner does not; but at the same time no student of mythology would apply our rules of morality to mythological personages. Mr. Curling girds also at the morality of Tristan; the justification of it would be equally simple, and even easier, but I will not go into the subject deeper. I fear that a gentleman who could describe the music of the first act of *Walküre* as "dreary and hysterical recitative" would scarcely be likely to give Wagner his due. But it is dangerous to pronounce rashly either on Wagner's music or his ideas.

R. O. HUTCHINSON.

CLIFTON, June 19.

## 198 *A Wagnerian's Midsummer Madness*

SIR,—Your readers may remember Hans Andersen's story of the King's clothes, which were only to be found in the imagination of his admiring followers. I am heretic enough to believe that "Wagner's morality" has no more substantial existence than the royal robes in the fairy tale. But I quite agree with Mr. Hutchinson that it is not an edifying theme for discussion in your columns.

As to his defence of the *Walküre* libretto, I must confess that, to a Philistine like myself, it seems both "lame and impotent"; for (1) can any amount of blame in Act II. excuse the stage presentation of an incestuous and adulterous passion in Act I.? Would Mr. Hutchinson advise us to go and witness an exact reproduction, in the airy costume usual in Olympus, of the amours of Zeus and Europa, or of Aphrodite and Ares, on the ground that the gods and goddesses received a due punishment at the end of the play?

(2) If your correspondent will read the notice of my letter in the *Musical Times* for July, he will be surprised to learn, that *not* "the myth," but Wagner himself, is responsible for the infamous scene I have dared to hold up to reprobation. In the Norse legend, the incest of Siegmund and Sieglinde is unconscious, like that of *Œdipus*.

From a subjective point of view, it is therefore no sin at all. It was left for Wagner to make it a conscious act, and to let the criminals disgrace the art of music by the triumphant reiteration, "Sister and Bride."

In conclusion, will your non-musical readers forgive

my adding that, in face of the blind admiration of the Wagnerites, I venture to style the so-called "continuous melody" of Wagner's *Nibelungen Lied* and of his *Tristan* "hysterical," not "rashly," but after years of study. It often consists for forty or fifty pages of wild discords and unvocal intervals and progressions, which cease to startle, or to interest, many music-lovers from their sheer monotony. Violent discords and progressions of course occur in the no less dramatic scenes of *Fidelio*, of Gluck's *Alceste* and his two *Iphigenias*, of Brahms's *Rinaldo*, Verdi's *Otello*, of Boïto's *Mefistofele*—above all, in Cherubini's magnificent, but, alas! neglected, "tetralogy" of "noble words to noble music wedded"—*Lodoiska*, *Faniska*, *Les Deux Journées*, and, what I hold to be the most perfect of all operas, *Medea*. But these are the exception, not the rule. They, therefore, only add by contrast to the regular beauty of their exquisite surroundings.

May we soon have a Gluck and Cherubini "boom," as earnest, and more enduring than the present craze for Wagner's latest "ideas" is likely to prove in the long run! Apologising for the length at which I am "inflicting my tediousness upon you,"

EDWARD CURLING.

CLITHEROE VICARAGE, DOWNHAM.

SIR,—I have read in your issue of 19th inst. the letter of your correspondent, Edward Curling, and I am glad to see the expression of an opinion in your

columns which one could wish was more general than it is.

The libretti of many of the prominent operas that are from time to time performed, leave, in most instances, very much to be desired. The splendid music to *Il Don Giovanni* is marred by what to Beethoven was an abhorrent libretto. He expressed surprise that Mozart could have found music for such a subject.

*Faust*, again, exquisite as is the music, is not a wholesome libretto, whilst the two operas of Wagner named by your correspondent are indeed, as he aptly terms them, "the glorification of adultery and incest." Here is a quotation from the critique in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 16, 1892, of what was, I believe, the first performance of *Tristan und Isolde* in this country :—

"The drama is powerful, and its events march sternly, relentlessly, to the end, commanding an absorbed interest in every spectator. We may regard much of the language as exaggerated, and look upon the passion of Tristan and Isolde as less the pure and refined feeling of love than an *unreasoning animalism*, modified by a Pagan desire to escape love's troubles through the pains of death." (The italics are mine.)

Now whatever be the beauty of music as an abstract Art, if it has to be associated in the mind of the hearer with the idea of coarse lust, I maintain that any elevating effect it might otherwise possess is destroyed. If the subject of a painting be revolting, no amount of skill in the drawing or colouring will atone. It should be

remembered that it is pleaded for Wagner's operas, more, perhaps, than for any other example of the genus, that music and libretto are essentially *one*—that, apart from the latter, the former has no meaning. If this be so, then they stand or fall together; and it is astonishing to see a Christian public on the one hand striving to purify the corridors of its music halls, and on the other applauding the performance of such a subject as *Tristan* or the *Walküre*.

I am quite aware that the argument used in favour of such operas is that they are "Art"; that they require enlightenment and cultivation ere they can be appreciated; that the evil is in the mind of the beholder; and so forth. History gives a different answer. The greatest artists have not thought so. Cherubini's masterpiece, *Les Deux Journées* (why is it never performed?), is as pure a libretto as one could wish. Beethoven wrote but one opera, because he would not condescend to immortalise filth. While Mendelssohn, writing after witnessing the performance of an opera in which an undesirable scene occurred, exclaimed, 'I have no music for such things.'

Why is it that our musical drama has been hitherto supplied with such garbage? Gilbert and Sullivan have proved what it is possible to do with opera comique and yet be pure. Is there no road to be found for opera seria too?

WILLIAM J. PRESSEY.

FOXEARH, ESSEX, June 25.



SIR,—Both the writer of the editorial note in this month's *Musical Times* and the Rev. Edward Curling, in accepting the statement therein made, are in error. It is incorrect to say that "Wagner deliberately adopted the conscious incest, and ignored the Scandinavian version of the legend which represents the connexion as taking place unwittingly."

In the Icelandic "Volsunga Saga," Sigmund, whom Signey (Sieglinde) visits in the guise of a witch-wife, is, it is true, ignorant of his sister's identity; but she herself is perfectly aware of the relationship. . . .

CHARLES DOWDESWELL,

*Hon. Sec. Wagner Society.*

Mr. Bennett's eagle eye had not failed to note the first of these letters, and he, anxious as he is to "return again and again to the vital matter of present-day tendencies," comments on the Rev. Edward Curling's letter, as follows, in notes to the *Musical Times*, called *Facts, Rumours, Remarks*:

"The Rev. Edward Curling, of Downham, Clitheroe, has been sampling Wagnerian libretti, and does not like them. So much have they disgusted him, in fact, that he lifts up a warning voice in the *Church Times*, imploring music-loving clergy and laymen to touch not the unclean thing."

Mr. Bennett then quotes the body of the letter,

and "returns to the vital matter of present-day tendencies" with some advice as gratuitously offered as that to Liszt, on which I have already commented. The reverend gentleman had made out his case too weakly for Mr. Bennett; that is to say, he did not misrepresent Wagner sufficiently for the "vital matter of present-day tendencies," and Mr. Bennett rushed into the breach with some quite serviceable effect on the law of Change which governs Evil [mark it, Mr. Bennett] as well as good. Clericalism has always been deficient in its argument, and the layman ever ready to correct that deficiency. This was Mr. Bennett's chance; so he tendered this advice:—

"Mr. Curling might have added that Wagner deliberately adopted the unconscious incest, and ignored the Scandinavian version of the legend which represents the connexion as taking place unwittingly. Special pleaders on the opposite side will, of course, assure Mr. Curling that Wagner's characters are mythical beings, having nothing to do with the ethics of humanity. In that case they have nothing to tell humanity. An audience should be found for them as 'far removed' as themselves."

The Rev. Edward Curling did not fail to see the rumour in the *Musical Times*, and the

reader can see, by reference to his second letter, what trusting creatures these clergy are. The *Daily Telegraph* suits one, the *Musical Times* another. It never occurs to them that even these journals are fallible. Now let the reader first of all digest Mr. Charles Dowdeswell's letter (the fifth of the series), or as much of it as I have printed here. There he can observe that the deliberation attributed to Wagner is false.

Let us look, now, upon this incident as it illustrates Wagner's case and that of his opponents.

Why did Mr. Bennett take the trouble to single out this unfortunate letter of a reverend gentleman, only in order, in addition to cruelly advertising it, to reproach Wagner with doing a thing deliberately which Wagner did not do at all? Is it not as well for Mr. Bennett that I refrain from charging anti-Wagnerianism with this self-same deliberation. Otherwise, what sort of a case could I make out against Mr. Bennett! Again, what made the reverend gentleman accept Mr. Bennett's hastily accorded and ill-advised help as further proof of the immoral tendency of Wagner's works? Does it never strike these professors of Christianity that they should go to the fountain head for

information when uttering reproaches against their fellow-creatures? Is anti-Wagnerianism a thing so creditable in its historical aspect that it can dispense with fair play? Such are questions which may strike any one. But the main question I have to put illustrates most penetratingly the utter perversity of anti-Wagnerianism. After Mr. Dowdeswell's letter, exposing the untruthfulness of the assertion, an assertion aggravated quite unnecessarily by the charge of deliberateness, why was not as great an eagerness betrayed by Mr. Bennett to comment on Mr. Dowdeswell's letter as on Mr. Curling's? The following numbers of the *Church Times* and the *Musical Times* preserved a damaging silence. Is that honourable? Does it serve an honourable purpose to rush in with falsehoods which are intended to serve the purpose of damaging the character and Art of one of the world's geniuses, and then hold hard back from rectifying the stigma which now attaches itself to those who are exposed as misrepresenting the case? Think of this unacknowledged misrepresentation, by a professed teacher of Christian morals, and a critic who laments the evil tendency of the age; a critic with a study, too,

and an experience which makes it hard for any one to believe that anything more was necessary to provide himself with correct information on the matter than the taking down of a book from a shelf close at hand—not to insinuate that the hastiness of attributing deliberation to Wagner is strong evidence in favour of deliberateness in the spreader of the false version.\*

Thus, you see, my mission is an easy one. If the anti-Wagnerian wishes to make effective onslaught on Wagner, his proceedings should be—— But no; after all, I will not tell him. If he cannot tell himself, I won't. But, as a final piece of advice, I counsel the anti-Wagnerian, past, present, and future, to learn that the hounding down of a man by misrepresentation must fail of its purpose,

\* Two years later Mr. Bennett writes in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Again, Wagner might have kept his story in some respects more decent by following the Icelandic. The much-debated incest scene in *Die Walküre* appears to be an invention of the librettist himself. True, the legend represents the Volsung race as perpetuated by incest, but minimises the offence by making the woman approach the man in a disguise, which prevents him from recognising his sister. Wagner, on the other hand, brings down the curtain upon Siegmund's open avowal: 'Bride and sister be thou to thy brother; so blossom the Walsung's blood.' I have heard, of course, that this is but an instance of hardy dramatic truth. Possibly; but there are some truths which may not be uttered, much less represented in the concrete."

because our age is too democratic not to know what fair play is able to effect, and even the gratuitous exposure of real weaknesses, and the raking up of real faults of our great men, where corroborated by substantial evidence, is not a thing to be proud of, and does more harm to the interested party than to the object of their attack.\* What the anti-Wagnerian has to do if he wishes to oppose Wagner is to cease abuse, even if substantiated by proof, and run as great a genius on his theory as Wagner provided for himself. Then the wind may be taken out of Wagner's sails. And for my part I wish them the best of luck.

\* Mr. Newman is evidently of the same opinion, as far as personal abuse is concerned. On p. 390 of his book he speaks of the "scavenger dogs who prey upon the refuse of musical as upon other literature," and asks "whether there ought not to be a law to keep curs out of the cemeteries." Perhaps it is better to use less severe language, and point it a bit more directly if effect is looked for.

### III.

#### *THE POETRY IN WAGNER'S PROSE.*

THAT the special pleading which Wagner's *Prose Works* disclose can be turned into a vindication of his aim and purpose, instead of being reproachfully employed to point the extortionate egoism of his character, has its justification in two sources: one, the universality of the poetic nature which evolves, out of its own freedom, beneficial laws for individuals; the other, the proof that the true poetic aim of the dramas, being now approached from the prosaic side, has light thrown on its real content, step by step, as the theoretical and æsthetic views are being developed. Wagner described (unfairly, but tersely) Meyerbeer as a banker to whom it occurred to write music; of himself it may be said that he was a dramatic Poet to whom it occurred to write music. The necessity of making others understand the huge poetic aim of the works, as

well as of satisfying himself, led him to prove that the development of music had taken place along other lines than that of the Opera—that in developing from the extreme of rhythm and the extreme of harmony there existed a trend to unification from the dance to dramatic expression through the symphony, form becoming more and more subject to a poetical idea, and harmony more and more the womb of melody. His poetic bent impregnated his prose in such a way that while it obscures the reasoning, it gives play to the poetic fancy. But this fact, however detrimental to lucidity, only serves to disclose the more how Wagner was above all a poet, so strongly imbued with the dramatic bent when these works were written, that the necessary deliberation and revision were impossible to him, because what lay nearest his heart was not to be eliminated, even from an exposition of his theory, by any urgency of clearness. Mr. Ashton Ellis, in the preface to the seventh volume of the translation of the *Prose Works*, which deals with the earliest of Wagner's contributions to musical journals, before revolution had driven him into exile, praises the lucidity of Wagner's style in these writings, a style which was



lost in some measure when the more important works came to be written. The reason for this can lie in nothing else than that the bursting poetical sentiment precluded the cool-headed scientific treatment which a theory such as his stood doubly in need of ; for over and above this requirement for its own sake, its glow provided critics who came forward clamorously to criticise such works, with a just complaint, whose justice, indeed, obscured the now obvious fact that on them the real poetic aim of the dramatist Wagner could make the least impression. Neither critics nor artists improve their criticism by emotion. But just as surely as emotion served to obscure Wagner's theoretical writings, so surely did the want of it in the critics obscure the fact that Wagner's nature was above all poetical. So that when all justice is done to Wagner's desire to enlarge on the nature of the Drama and the significance of life as it presented material for constructing a drama in which music was the main expression, it remains certain that not even theoretical obligations could eliminate from the poet his innate mode of expression. Between him and his critics there stands a screen which obscures

the undoubted lucidity pervading the *Prose Works*, in spite of all the poetic symbolism these contain. From Wagner's point of view that screen is sympathy; from the critics' it is indifference, or even antipathy. And in exposing, further, what this indifference of the critic is, we not only hit on the characteristic trait of Wagner's poetic genius—namely, humanity—but we come to understand why professional critics and Wagner have ever been in eternal conflict, and how he had to give rise to a new school of enthusiasts, who also, from sympathy, preferred appreciation to depreciation. Coming to this presently, we must dwell for a moment on the relationship of Drama to music, for where these link together, there lies the bed rock of those poetical sentiments which forced Wagner to surcharge his *Prose Works* with his faith in Art and the poetic sentiment of his dramas. This faith and poetry he has described, in his *Communication to my Friends* (I., page 364), as “*the Purely-human, freed from every shackle of convention.*”

Such, according to him, is the specific work for delineation of the Word-tone Poet.

An exhaustive attempt to prove that Wagner

was in the main—we do not deal in absolute terms here—right in his theory, could only be established by leading up to an agreement with him from the views of those who had preceded him ; but on such a historical basis some previous understanding would need to be arrived at with regard to the employment of the word “drama.” It must be evident that the word “drama” should only be employed in such a broad sense, that no qualification is forced on us, narrowing it down to a specific meaning. Nor need the broadness of this sense in any way preclude a perfectly definite and particular meaning attaching itself to the word. Specific and particular are not necessarily synonyms. Quality keeps them wide apart. The very first thing that probably occurs to the reader is that Wagner’s own term “musical” drama offends in this direction ; but the fact is, Wagner objected to the term “musical” drama. Over and above this, we should require to understand what he meant by the word “music,” for it would be found that in no sense was it to be used as a qualifying adjective, but more as a synonym for Drama, or, at any rate, for what gave birth to the artistic drama ; in other words,

that it was a complete parallel, an artistic concomitance, a side of the universe which makes actually known by hearing that which self-consciousness has suggested to it, after exercise of the other senses. Thus, long before Wagner can be successfully criticised, we must grant, not by any arbitrary process, the complete dramatic Art-work its most particular mode of expression—namely, music, without which it would not be complete—which gives birth neither to the poetic purpose, nor is born of it, but at one and the same time comes into existence with it. If, however, the word “drama” has any narrower significance than its dictionary meaning, “action”—if it now signifies a complete\* stage play—then, owing to our looking at it from the artistic point of view, it is music itself which has actually given birth to Drama; music is the mother’s womb of Drama, just as harmony is the great sea out of which, with the aid of rhythm or form, we are presented with melody. To quote from the short essay, “On the name ‘Musik-drama,’” in vol. v. of the Prose translations:—

\* The *complete* stage play, it must be noted, used in Wagner’s sense.

"I certainly have reason to suppose that this term was invented for the sake of honouring my later dramatic works with a distinctive classification: but the less I have felt disposed to accept it, the more have I perceived an inclination in other quarters to adopt the name for a presumably new art-genre, which would appear to have been bound to evolve in answer to the temper and tendencies of the day, even without any intervention, and now to lie ready as a cosy nest for every one to hatch his musical eggs in. . . . But 'Musik-drama,' similarly interpreted as 'drama for the object of music,' would have no sense at all, were it not point-blank the old familiar libretto, which, at any rate, was a drama expressly constructed for music. . . . Upon closer inspection, however, we find that the solecism here consists in the now favourite conversion of an adjectival predicate into a substantival prefix; one had begun by saying a 'musical drama.' . . . The obstacle to devising a name for this Art-work was accordingly, in any event, the assumed necessity of indicating that the new whole had been formed by welding two disparate elements—Music and Drama—together. And certainly the greatest difficulty is to place 'Music' in a proper position toward 'Drama,' since it can be brought into no equality therewith, as we have just seen, and must rank as either much more or much less than 'Drama.' The reason surely lies in the fact that the word 'music' denotes an *Art*, originally the whole assemblage of the Arts, whilst 'drama' strictly denotes a *deed* of Art. . . . The primary

meaning of 'drama' is a *deed* or *action*; as such, displayed upon the stage, it at first formed but a portion of the tragedy, *i.e.* the sacrificial choral chant, but at last invaded it from end to end, and thus became the main affair. By its name one now denoted for all ages an action shown upon the stage, and, to lay stress on this being a performance to look at, the place of assembly was called the 'theatron,' the looking room. . . . But Music is placed in an utterly false relation to this 'show play' if she now is to form but a part of that whole. . . . Of a truth she is 'the part that once was all,' and even now she feels called on to re-assume her ancient dignity, as the mother-womb of Drama. Yet in this high calling she must neither stand before nor behind the Drama: she is no rival, but its mother."

In a similar sense in *The Art-Work of the Future*, page 112, Wagner speaks of harmony as the sea from which sound arises as out of her native element, and—

"This element is that same mother-element, the womanly from whose womb—the *ur-melodic* expressional faculty—there issued word and word-speech so soon as it was fecundated by the actual outward-lying objects of Nature."\*

Drama, then, as soon as it means a stage play, which is a narrower sense than the word presents

\* *Opera and Drama*, II., page 235.

originally, cannot give birth to music, but is born of its art. If, however, we take Drama in its dictionary meaning, "action," then we find that music is neither more nor less than "action's" artistic rendering. Wagner, we see, is at once driven to adopt poetical similes to express himself, so we may as well turn to see what this poetic instinct in him was, which gave birth to one continuous effort to arrive at the *Purely-human, freed from every shackle of conventionality*, and how, to develop its own, it discarded a prevailing conventional poetic instinct which aims at glorifying the creation of the egoistic imagination, with but small regard for Wagner's ideal—namely, the *Purely-human*. The conventional hymn-tune has no place in Wagner.

When he collected his writings for publication in 1872 into nine volumes, Wagner wrote an introduction to the first of these ardent revolutionary works, namely, *Art and Revolution*. This introduction, written twenty-two years after the essays at a time when the optimistic revolutionary vogue had given place to more sober views, gives us a clear insight into what Wagner expected of Art in these days of turmoil and insurrection. The

current idea that revolution carries with it only destructive tendencies has no part in Wagner's idealism. Revolution is not a thing with only one side to it. Bakunin the anarchist, who was one of his acquaintances in the Dresden days, when plotting was going on to upset at one blow the governments of Germany, said that Wagner was a visionary; but it is more likely that the most ideal of Wagner's visions possessed a substratum of reality which made it more sane than the lurid reality of an anarchist such as Bakunin, who only lived to destroy and overthrow. The manner in which Wagner's artistic vision kept to a practical field was rooted in the belief that Art harboured the potency of preventing the chaos which a senseless, aimless revolution must lead to. So we find him in 1872, at the commencement of this introduction to *Art and Revolution* and the other writings of 1850, quoting Carlyle's *French Revolution* to explain what he wanted of Art.

"There is the next milestone for you, in the History of Mankind! That universal Burning-up, as in hell-fire, of Human shams. The oath of twenty-five million men which has since become that of all men whatsoever: 'Rather than live longer under lies, we will die.'



## 218 *A Wagnerian's Midsummer Madness*

That is the New Act in World-History. . . . When the Spontaneous Combustion breaks out, and many-coloured, with loud noises, envelopes the whole world in anarchic flame for long hundreds of years ; then has the Event come ; there is the thing for all men to mark, and to study and scrutinise as the strangest thing they ever saw. Centuries of it yet lying ahead of us ; several sad centuries, sordidly tumultuous, and good for little ! Say Two Centuries yet, say even Ten of such a process : before the Old is completely burnt out, and the New in any state of sightliness ? Millennium of Anarchies ! *abridge it, spend your heart's-blood upon abridging it, ye Heroic wise that are to come.*"

Wagner comments on this :

"When in the feverish excitement of the year 1849 I gave vent to an appeal such as that contained in the immediately succeeding essay,\* *Art and Revolution*, I believe that I was in complete accord with the last words of this summons of the grey-headed historian. I believed in the Revolution, and in its unrestrainable necessity, with certainly no greater immoderation than Carlyle ; only I also felt that I was called to point out to it the way of rescue. Far though it was from my intent to define the New, which should grow from the ruins of a sham-filled world, as a fresh *political* ordering, I felt the rather animated to draw the outlines of the *Art-work* which should rise from the ruins of a sham-bred *Art*.

\* That is, in the collected works following this preface.

To hold the Art-work up to Life itself, as the prophetic mirror of its Future, appeared to me a weightiest contribution towards the work of damming the flood of Revolution within the channel of the peaceful-flowing stream of Manhood. . . . I will only say here that the principal cause which brought down the ridicule of our Art-critics upon my seemingly paradoxical ideas, is to be found in the fervid enthusiasm which pervaded my style and gave to my remarks more of a poetic than a scientific character. Moreover, the effect of an indiscriminate intercalation of philosophical maxims was prejudicial to my clearness of expression, especially in the eyes of those who could not or would not follow my line of thought and general principles."

Having seen that the political idea underlying all Wagner's dramatic work is the *Purely-human, freed from every shackle of convention*, we may understand how the necessary poetical bent of mind for conceiving a condition of this kind with an Art-work such as the *Ring* in his head and another such as *Lohengrin* already composed, would inevitably be kept out of these prose writings of his, a fact which he at a later period expressed (1860) in a letter\* to a French friend in the words :

\* "Zukunftsmusik," English translation, vol. iii., page 295.

"For I should have deemed it clean impossible, had I been once more obliged to thread the labyrinth of theoretic speculation in a purely abstract form; whilst the great repugnance I now experience against so much as reading through my theoretic essays, teaches me that I was in a thoroughly abnormal state of mind when I wrote them, a state such as well may arise for once in an artist's life, but cannot fitly be repeated."

Also, how the Prose work of that time, *The Art-Work of the Future*, was merely a subjective writing, and how he attached no further value to it, he tells his friend, than—

"that it may have for those who would be interested to hear how, and in what manner of speech, a productive artist was once at the pains of throwing light—above all for himself—on problems which are generally left to the critic by trade to puzzle out, but which can hardly thrust themselves upon the latter with the same peculiar urgency as on the former." \*

With this view most people who are not trade critics will agree, for it requires but little knowledge of the way we get correct information to admit that he who knows the most about a thing is best able to offer us advice on the question. So with

\* "*Zukunftsmusik*," English translation, vol. iii., page 309.

Wagner, we may be sure, the more intense his "special pleading," the better and more to the point was the information concerning a very obscure process, which goes on in the mind of that inscrutable being the genius, who, in setting our present laws at defiance, gives posterity its better laws.\* A good insight may from this instance be obtained into that curious operation which must have struck many students of Wagnerian literature—namely, that the harder and more effective are the blows critics deal at Wagner, the more certain they glance off him and leave him unscathed when the true position of a genius to his age is rightly understood. It is thus a matter of fact that the more the poet Wagner peeps out from these Prose writings, the more certain it is that at heart he was a poet, a dramatic poet in his own right, who had become possessed of a stupendous gift for musical expression, just when the poetry stimulated him to music. For when Wagner tries to write music apart from a poetic basis, he nods more violently than any

\* As to whether these laws are, relative to a posterity, any better than the existing laws relative to a present generation, is the problem for solution. The future law, relative to the past, may be better, but it must also be better in the sense of relativity to its age. Is such a problem in any wise solvable?

genius of his calibre ever nodded. It is probable that no man who, by the gentle force of beauty, ever stirred so deeply the hearts of the multitude, has sunk so low as Wagner, when he composed his Philadelphia Exhibition March or his A Flat Major Sonata; and he knew this himself, for we find him lamenting, in a letter to Liszt, his miserable incapacity to produce absolute music. On the other hand, no one has soared so high as he when he was giving vent to his poetical feeling in those creations of the purely-human—the Volsungs. The most heartfelt strains are devoted to these artistic perceptions, and it is in a knowledge of what these are that the depth of Wagner's purely human poetry is sounded.

The ideal, and at the same time practical,\* man is led by his needs and wants into unconscious revolt with artificial and official surroundings. To satisfy his most ordinary physical requirements he is driven into conflict with a certain class, whose material wants finding continual satisfaction, neutralises any tendency to idealism born of want, or, if stimulated in this direction, who are led into a sentimental vein, which loses itself in misty

\* It is the ideal and non-practical man who escapes this revolt.

abstraction to indulge in dreams of heaven, from which the ever-pressing and painfully conspicuous degradation of the hard-worked people is shut out. Sated officialism and speculative clericalism are thus banished from providing food for Wagner's poetic imagination. Neither could be worked up for the purely-human Art-work. But if these are banished from among the poet's material,\* they are both paramount in forming the conventions and despotically regulating the affairs of the people. But conventional laws for the people, were not the need of the people; and alone in the latter was Wagner provided with that which could stimulate and excite him to action. And thus revolution worked itself out of the wants of those who were led to revolt for no other reason than that they possessed wants. Necessity ruled everything, and nothing else was left to beneficially guide this unconscious drift to revolution out of the chaos of anarchy, than the Art-work of the man who could neither allow his idealism to be satiated by court luxuries, nor wander into sentimentalism which lost sight of the Drama's sole basis—namely, sympathy with the natural wants of

\* Except as satire.

the people. To be natural\* was to be sympathetic. The revolution which was to bring this about was no destroying angel, but a goddess who rejuvenated mankind, who, in depriving the pampered court of its unnatural luxuries, deprived it of that conventionalism which destroyed idealism. By spreading her benefits around, the goddess raised the populace out of the sordidness of sheer physical want into a condition which now made the purely-human idealism of the Arts capable of appreciation. In a glowing article, called *The Revolution*, in Rœckel's democratic paper, Wagner draws a picture of the arrival of the divine goddess of revolution, which has much in common with Addison's essay, *A New Distribution of Honours*. There remains, of course, the wide difference that where Addison impresses us with his carefully polished style, where the individual interest is reduced to a mere academician, Wagner impresses us with the fervour of his heartfelt interest in others. Here is a man whose heart really beats in sympathy with that of the multitude. Their interests are his. It is no essay, one out of a thousand, written in the

\* The word "natural" at this time was synonymous with "purely-human."

course of a monotonous life, where the customs of a select class gave the tone of what was considered correct, but a torrent of enthusiasm, an outpouring of a commoner's impulsive feelings. Apart from this, there are many points of similarity.

Addison, speaking of himself, says :

“I was looking very attentively on that Sign of the Heavens which is called by the name of the *Balance*, when on a sudden there appeared in it an extraordinary light, as if the sun should rise at midnight. By its increasing in breadth and lustre, I soon found that it approached towards the earth; and at length could discern something like a shadow hovering in the midst of a great glory, which, in a little time after, I distinctly perceived to be the figure of a Woman.”

Wagner, speaking of others, says :

“Behold ! they gather from the villages and homesteads : it is they who have cultivated the earth and transformed it into a pleasure-garden, and their labours were rewarded with the abundance of harvest sufficient for every human being ; but see, they are poor and unclad and hungry, because the blessings of the earth are not for them, nor for those who suffer from want, but they belong to the rich and powerful, who claim the world and its population as theirs. All of these



hundreds and millions encamp on the heights, and look out into the distance where the gathering clouds proclaim the advent of the revolution ; and every one of them who, with pale, sorrow-stricken countenances, who, with bodies consumed with hunger and frost, never knew what joy was—they all lie encamped on the heights, and with tremulous expectation, and with streaming eyes, they look towards the approaching vision, and in breathless rapture listen to the murmur of the gathering storm which wafts to them the first greetings of the revolution.”

Addison says :

“ I fancied it might have been the Angel of Intelligence that guided the constellation from which it descended ; but upon a nearer view I saw about her all the emblems with which the *Goddess of Justice* is usually described. Her countenance was unspeakably awful and majestick, but exquisitely beautiful to those whose eyes were strong enough to behold it ; her Smiles transported with rapture, her Frowns terrified to despair. She held in her hand a Mirror, endowed with the same qualities as that which the Painters put into the hand of Truth.”

Wagner said :

“ Truly we know it, this old world ; it is being shattered, and a new world shall arise from its ruins, for the sublime goddess REVOLUTION is arriving

on the wings of the brewing storm, lightning playing round her august head, the sword grasped in the right hand, the torch in the left, her eye so threatening, so avenging, so distant, and yet, to those who dare look into it with a steady gaze, so radiant with abundant grace and fervour of the purest love."

Addison says in his own person what he heard his goddess say :

"In the meantime the world was in an alarm, and all the inhabitants of it gathered together upon a spacious plain ; so that I seemed to have the whole species before my eyes. A voice was heard from the clouds declaring the intention of this visit, which was to restore and appropriate to every one living what was his due, and the fear and hope and joy and sorrow, which appeared in this great assembly, after this solemn declaration, are not to be expressed. The first edict was then pronounced, *That all claims to riches and estates should be immediately invested in the rightful owner. . . .*"

Wagner makes his goddess speak for herself :

"I am the secret of perpetual youth, the everlasting creator of life ; where I am not death rages. I am the comfort, the hope, the dream of the oppressed. . . . I will renovate to the very foundations the order of things in which you live. I will dissipate every delusion which has mastery over the human race. I will destroy the authority of the one over the many ; of the material over

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the spiritual. . . . Let the delusion be trampled under foot which gives to one individual power over millions ; which reduces millions to the subjection of one ; which would teach that one possesses the power to make happy others. The peer dare not rule over his peer, he has no power over his equal ; and thus, since all are equal, I will destroy the mastery of the one over the other."

Addison says :

"The next command was for the whole body of mankind to separate themselves into Proper Families ; which was no sooner done, but an Edict was issued out, requiring all children *to repair to their True and Natural Fathers*. This put a great part of the assembly in motion ; for as the Mirror was moved over them, it inspired every one with such a natural Instinct as directed them to their Real parents. It was a very melancholy spectacle to see Fathers of very large families become childless, and Batchelors undone by a change of Sons and Daughters. You might see a presumptive Heir of great estate ask blessing of his Coachman, and a celebrated Toast paying her duty to a *valet de chambre*. Men were no sooner settled in their right to their Possessions and their Progeny, but there was a third order proclaimed, *That all the Posts of Dignity and Honour in the Universe should be conferred on persons of the greatest Merit, Abilities, and Perfection. . . .*"

"In the second column, consisting of the men of knowledge, there had been great disputes before they

fell into the ranks, which they did not do at last without positive commanding of the goddess who presided over the assembly. She had so ordered it that men of the greatest genius and strongest sense were placed at the head of the column. Behind these were such as had formed their minds very much on the thoughts and writings of others. In the rear of the column were men who had more wit than sense, or more learning than understanding. All living authors of any value were ranged in one of these classes ; but I must confess I was very much surprised to see a great body of editors, critics, commentators, and grammarians meet with so very ill a reception. They had formed themselves into a body, and with a great deal of arrogance demanded the first station in the columns of knowledge ; but the goddess, instead of complying with their request, clapped them all into liveries, and bade them know themselves for no other than lacqueys of the learned."

Wagner makes his goddess say :

"Let not hatred, envy, jealousy, animosity, remain among you. You must recognise as brothers and sisters all who live ; and free, free to will, free to act, free to enjoy, you shall know the worth of existence. Arise, then, ye people of the earth, arise ye sorrow-stricken oppressed. Ye also who vainly struggle to clothe the inner desolation of your hearts with the transient glory of riches. Arise ! Come and follow in

my track with the joyful crowd, for I know not how to make distinction between those who follow me. . . . Now behold the crowds on the hill-tops ; they bend reverentially the knee, they harken in silent rapture, their withered hearts suck up the murmur of the brewing storm, and new life pulses through their veins as the parched land absorbs the refreshing showers of rain. Nearer and nearer rolls the storm with the Revolution on its wings. Wide open are the newly awakened hearts of those aroused to life, and victoriously the Revolution enters in on their minds, on their bodies, and takes entire possession of them. In divine rapture they rise from the earth ; no longer are they poor, no longer are they hungry and bent down with care ; proudly they raise their heads, enthusiasm pours from their transfigured countenances, luminous rays stream from their eyes, and with a shout thrilling the very heavens, 'I am a living being,' the millions, the living revolution, divinely exalted man, rush down into the valleys and the plains, and announce to the whole world the new evangel of happiness."

If we had to get rid of the sated official of court life and the visionary sentimentalist of clerical, it would seem, by comparing the different styles in which Addison and Wagner give vent to similar sentiments—for we see both of them keep hold on the human being and his physical welfare—that the mere stylist and literary celebrity has no enthusiasm

or pulsating sympathy underlying his diction. All remains cold indifference, the true poet never bursts out, with the result that most people can read Addison apart from being imbued with one suspicion that it is more than a disinterested, intellectual, and pleasing occupation for weary hours. One might fancy that three-fourths of such essays only spring from a desire to utter in a somewhat more polished style a "fine frenzy" which had been said by others of the same kidney often before. But with Wagner we feel a substantial reality in the midst of his optimistic fervour, which tells us that he is standing among us, as one of us. So his active poetry is our latent desire, his power of expression is our power of feeling, now stimulated into activity, and in the face of all unrealisable imagery, a reality binds us together which makes the essay of Addison only a curiosity in polished style beside it. To elucidate Wagner's poetry one has to have the heart which beats with his before ever the brain troubled itself to ask the why and the wherefore of this sympathy. So the one central fact about Wagner is that his poetry concerns itself with the relations of human beings; there is no landscape without at least two individuals, in whom

the interest centres because they have either something to attract them to, or something to repel them from each other. Thus is Wagner's idealism always on a solid footing. *Art and Revolution* is little more than a prose poem, which, directed against the hypocrisy of the age, keeps the artistic ideal vividly to the front. Its great interest for us, who are looking for his poetic sentiment, lies in the concluding words:

"Let us therefore erect the altar of the future in Life as in the living Art, to the two sublimest teachers of mankind : *Jesus, who suffered for all men ; and Apollo, who raised them to their joyous dignity.*"

In view of the later development of Wagner's thought, it is of interest to see how he looked at this period on Jesus as a subject of Art, where Apollo most unquestionably held the place of honour. This Wagner has done in his *Jesus of Nazareth*, where the figure presents itself merely as the victim of a corrupt and conventional authority, a victim who succumbed because his sacrifice would stir man up to revolt against a false order of things. There was no conception of a reality which was capable of giving birth to an Art of its

own, a reality which developed the purely-human in its most exalted self-conscious superiority, just at the moment of its deepest degradation at the hands of authority. No, here Jesus degraded himself for the sake of his fellow-creatures : the lesson to be learnt from this lay, not positively with him, but with that physical Apollo which the despair of Jesus brought into greater relief. At a later period Wagner's conception of Christ was elevated into a figure which reflected the tragic nature of temporal existence ; here, in the earlier days, he was only that Jesus who was a type of the hopeless victim which, if Apollo were elevated into the reality, would vanish of itself the more man grew up into physical perfection, freed from convention. In *The Art-Work of the Future* this poetical idea of the physically imperfect man, in bondage to the shackles of conventional authority, is developed parallel with the granted bondage of Art, splintered into fragments :

“ As in the building of the Tower of Babel, when their speech was confounded and mutual understanding made impossible, the nations severed from each other, each one to go its several way ; so when all national solidarity had split into a thousand egoistic severalities, did the



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separate Art-branches cut-off themselves from the proud and heaven-soaring tree of Drama which had lost the inspiring soul of mutual understanding."\*

It is always Drama that Wagner comes back to, the drama of life in a double sense : in one where the interests and relations of human beings as a collective whole are almost unspeakably brought into relief with a majestic All, which in its abstract meaning Wagner conceived as love ; and in another as individuals among themselves, with their likes and dislikes uniting and severing on an ever-interesting battle-field. Then, there was always present to his mind the ideal order of things, just as Addison imagined in his essay, and to Wagner the gradations were noble or ignoble, just as the abstract conception of love regulated the relationships. This essay, *The Art-Work of the Future*, is sadly obscured by the vast similies Wagner indulges in. Harmony must be a sea and melody and rhythm must be the two shores ; as he puts it,

"through which the art of Tone lays hands on the twain continents of Art."

\* Vol. i., page 104-5.

In this vein he proceeds :

"The eye knows, but the surface of this sea ; its depth the depth of Heart alone can fathom. Upwards from its lightless bottom it expands into a sun-bright mirror ; the ever-widening rings of Rhythm cross over on it from one shore ; from the shady valleys of the other arise the yearning zephyrs that rouse this restful surface to the grace of swelling, sinking waves of Melody." \*

In this foolishly poetic way Wagner tried to enlighten himself and others on the nature of the associations of our musical ideas in time and space, instead of adopting the simple plan of the logician somewhat in the following vein :

"The associations  $A\pi$   $A\kappa$   $A\rho$  will signify three *similar* impressions which have fallen on the *different* spots  $p$   $q$   $r$  of the organ of sense, and which are prevented by this very difference in their local signs from being fused into one sensation, a fusion which could not have been prevented if the three  $A$ s had been perfectly identical ; since where no distinctions exist, no activity of consciousness can make them. The associations  $A\pi$   $B\kappa$   $C\rho$ , on the other hand, will signify three *dissimilar* impressions which affect those three different spots in

\* Vol. i., page 112.

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the organ at the same time ; these impressions, owing to their qualitative difference, need nothing further to prevent their fusion into one sensation, and all that  $\pi \kappa \rho$  give them is their spatial arrangement. Lastly  $A\kappa B\kappa C\kappa$  would be the same three *dissimilar* stimuli, acting on one and the *same* spot,  $q$ , in the organ of sense, and therefore, as we seem obliged to suppose, appearing *successively* at the same point in our perception of space."

It certainly is a pity that Wagner's theoretical writings are not full of this style, but we have to deal with facts, and therefore must proceed to extract the lucid poetry from him, leaving it to others to extract the lucid logic from arguments of the above type. Wagner keeps on developing his idea that as nature produced the natural man, Art produces the artistic, and in this sense, holding by his comments on the quotation from Carlyle, he seems to have had a considerable business in hand in undertaking to develop this artistic man. Once done, however, there would be no fear but that "the work of damming the flood of Revolution" must receive a valuable aid in an Art purified from the sordidness of the age with which it had been overlaid. And he held—doubtless wrongly, from  $A\kappa B\kappa C\kappa$  point of view, but maybe rightly from the

poetical, which is more "purely-human" than Aκ Bκ Cκ—that the Want which was the nature of the people, if only freed from the shackles of conventionality, would accomplish its own end. Thus, he proceeds to say, it was the Want which—

"drove the Israelites, already turned to dull and sordid beasts of burden, through the waters of the Red Sea; and through the Red Sea also must Want drive *us* if we are ever, cleansed from shame, to reach the promised land."

And Wagner admitted that popular Want and popular poetry were expressions of the same thing, so he ends *The Art-Work of the Future* with :

"Since the poor Israelites have led me thus into the region of the fairest of all poetry, the ever fresh and ever truthful *poems of the Folk*, I will take my leave—by way of moral—with the outline of a glorious Saga, which long ago the raw, uncultured Folk of old-time Germany indited for no other reason than that of inner free necessity." \*

He then goes on to sketch the story of *Wieland the Smith*, with the aim of showing how a being

\* Vol.i, page 210.

who had once loved and lost was now forced into subjection to an envious king, who made Wieland toil and labour as a smith for no other purpose than to enrich him. To prevent him from gaining liberty, the king had cut the sinews of his feet. But Wieland remembered and longed for his lost love, and that want to obtain her drove him to forge wings by his own Art on which he soared aloft to join his love, and wherefrom he rained deadly shafts on his envious oppressor till they reached his heart and killed him. So has man by his Art to forge, out of the necessity which drives him to satisfy his wants, wings which shall free him from a slavery based on no less substantial a reality than the artificial conventional laws written on parchment are based. And beyond all question, a considerable drama opens itself out to a mind which seeks to portray the results of the conflict between the purely-human and the conventional. In *Opera and Drama* Wagner has become imbued with the spirit of his immense poetic idea as in no other of his prose works.

In doing justice to it, there has first of all to be explained his employment of the word "divine," because, in ordinary parlance, the poetry

which seeks its divinity in hymns and paraphrases, in oratorios and anthems, to give this word its significance, implies just what Wagner holds as conventional. That is to say, what we, as conventionalists, look for in vain beyond the sky, lies, from the human point of view, actually at our feet ; or, as is more poetically exemplified in the second act of the *Walküre*, in our arms. There, where Siegmund holds the persecuted, afflicted Sieglinde, he holds already more than Brünnhilde can offer him without her, in all the glory of Walhalla. What moves Siegmund to this is the purely-human love for his own, the devotion of the brother to the sister. And, becoming filled with compassion at the sight of this human devotion and love, Brünnhilde the goddess, Brünnhilde, armed with the seductive promises of a high place in the courts of Walhalla, Brünnhilde, the emissary of an inhuman vengeance, is turned into a revolutionary, because all the divinity of pomp and pride, which she is commissioned to represent, is not worth a farthing rushlight beside that of the divine purely-human she sees before her in the unselfish love of a brother for his sister. A man with an unconscious woman in his arms,

indifferent to any other conception of the word divine—a man filled with but one longing, one want, one joy—moves her wonderingly to ask—

So lightly dost thou hold eternal joy?

Is she thy all, this hapless woman,

Who, weary and suffering,

Helpless hangs in thy arms?

Naught else deem'st thou holy?

Then, having learnt that Siegmund's heart assuredly deemed naught else holy—that he was not in any wise capable of deeming holy aught else—she stamps with the revolutionary zeal of her rising compassion, approval and benison on Siegmund's divine, because purely human, action ; and thus the emissary of the god, of the conventional, is turned into the advocate of the purely-human: Walhalla's supremacy is undermined by a spiritual fluid which is taken from that vine, "the human heart which bears the wine of life." It is taken from the nature of the Volsung race, which, later, acting in accordance with the freewill of the god Wotan himself, sets itself to work out the redemption of God and man.\*

\* This the reader observes has its value in its poetry. Thus Wagner takes his place alongside other poets, or rather soars miles above them.

. The whole of *Opera and Drama* is a bringing together of such elements, in history, as permit of a stage representation, where the victory of the human over the artificial is sympathetically borne to the spectator's and auditor's feelings, without any intervention of more than falls to the province of the complete Art-work. And this contains the poetical idea which appropriates virtue to the heart, dramatically opposed to legal or official virtue. If we now employ our intellect to get this sentiment from Wagner's prose, we are offered a choice between its appropriation for one or for the other, but not for both ; otherwise there would be no drama. If virtue is written in the human heart, it is not also cut in runes on Wotan's spear ; or, in our prosaic day, written on parchment and bound with red tape. So it can be brought home and exemplified wherever the dramatic contrast is represented for our feelings in a stage play, or presented to our intellect in a literary work. With the latter we deal now.

We find Wagner saying, on page 191 of *Opera and Drama* :

"To-day we only need to faithfully expound the *myth of Ædipus* according to its inmost essence, and in it



we win an intelligible picture of the whole history of mankind, from the beginnings of society to the inevitable downfall of the State."

One sees there is no hesitation when a genius is imbued with a poetical idea in the speaking out of his mind on a subject which, from the *Απ Ακ Αρ* point of view, is much less intelligible. The inevitable downfall of the State is certainly not destined to take place till the downfall of all that supports it takes place as well. But in saying this much the poetical idea is already justified from its dramatical point of view ; for in life the balance which the poet has in his mind proceeds actually in accordance with the ratio as he conceived it. The State does not take on itself virtue, that thing enigmatic in quantity but distinct in quality, without doing damage to the distinction of the quality. And so we learn from the action of Antigone that she was moved by a feeling which forced her to revolt against what, for some reasons of State, intercepted her "want," and so there arose a difference. That very simple and inoffensive "want" was a desire to bury the body of her brother who had fallen in a battle with another brother to whom burial had

been accorded by this State. The cause of the difference lay in refusing a natural desire of the human heart in Antigone, by a decree from the head of the State coinciding with certain reasons which were manifestly to the material advantage of that head. So the two forces, the human and the artificial, come into conflict, and Wagner the poet is compelled to justify his poetic sentiment by declaring either for one side or for the other. This he does in no mistaken terms, as any one who knows anything about him will quickly believe. He actually works himself, in a book which would have been clearer—at least, we are told so, though some may doubt it—if he had demonstrated his point by  $A\pi A\kappa A\rho$ , into a state of enthusiasm for the action of Antigone, and bringing his own heart into a matter which deals solely with the heart of one who loved—just as Siegmund did—her own kith and kin, he finishes his account of the story of Antigone with the words :

*"Oh, Holy Antigone! on thee I cry! let wave thy banner, that beneath it we destroy and yet redeem."*

Well, you see, between Antigone, Wagner, and the person who sympathetically reads this, there

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exists a feeling of the heart which is just for all time and in all space the same thing, and so that heart echoes Wagner's words, while the intellect which is possessed of a dramatic instinct confirms it, knowing quite well that unless Antigone's banner persists in waving—as Wagner foolishly puts it—Creon's parchment will get stiffer, and the factories where red tape is made will have to pay its labourers overtime to meet the demand.

Otherwise the poetic sentiment is not so constant in *Opera and Drama* as in *The Art-Work of the Future*. What we have become clear on, however, is that divine and human are synonymous terms, and to this end, whatever changes Wagner underwent, these remain convertible.

In *The Communication to my Friends* there is pointed out the gradual march towards consciousness of the idea which, by force of intuition, was being worked out by Wagner's artistic genius. Once again we may say the departure lay in looking for the divine at our feet, instead of blankly staring for it beyond the stars. How long had poetry been finding expression in the legends

of the human race for this idea? Was it not one eternal struggle of its human heroes against the conventional tyrannous deities of its imagination? And the simple Christian religion was awaiting its time to be brought into line with this soul-stirring, magnificent poetry, instead of leaving it degraded as it confusedly emerges from the wiles of secular ecclesiasticism, an inverted religion setting the conventional above the human, setting the egoistic terrorising exoteric deity of the Jews, with its assumed responsibility, its helpless hell fire and idolatrous worship, above the human compassion and love for one's own, a compassion and love which spring directly from the heart at the sight of suffering and degradation. There is but one way of making the poetry of this idea reach the intellect of the populace, and that is through the heart, by the aid of Art and the Complete Dramatic Art-work. For the assured victory is borne along by a genius which, if it is at the moment of its realisation an unconscious process to the genius himself, is certainly not to be intellectually grasped by the dull populace, although that same populace is applauding the sentiment with all its heart in the theatre. The

ordinary leaders of men, the monarch, the politician, the ecclesiastic, the pseudo-philosopher, the military genius, the park demagogue, the penny-a-line critic, are incapable of boldly taking intellectual hold of the revolutionary idea of Wagner, because it palpably robs them of the foothold common to all of them, on which they scrape together what pretence they can for morality, and then fight over it among themselves, as dogs do over a bare bone.

But if they cannot grasp the idea intellectually, they, being men among men, are always contributing to its realisation where their natural kindness and goodness of heart finds expression in defiance of or relaxation from officialism and officiousness. For this is just the hall-mark of the artistic mind, that it is the direct antithesis of the official. Thus, in this sense alone, we may lead the poetic idea from *The Communication to my Friends* into these later writings of Wagner, where a wonderful change comes over the scene; for the poetic symbolism practically drops out of the prose, and gives place to a style that might be termed didactic, were it not that Wagner's dramatic instinct always makes him proceed by contrast instead of identity, from

the theatre instead of the academy. *The Communication to my Friends* was the last of these writings which Wagner gave to the world before the philosophy of Schopenhauer gave him the key to the real meaning of Christianity. In this last prose work of the optimistic period Wagner explains the growth of the poetical idea which plants the divine, the moral, the feeling of the heart, in this world, instead of in a problematical heaven. *Lohengrin* is the hinge for the conscious change which grew out of the old legends of Hercules and Prometheus, out of the fable of Zeus and Semele, out of the story of Ulysses and Calypso, and that of the same hero and Circe. *The Flying Dutchman* sought for an earthly love, *Tannhäuser* wearied of sensuality in a mystic sphere, *Lohengrin* came down out of his cold, aristocratic unknown Grail to gain the love of a human being, and it is on this instance, where the conventional idea of the divine seems to be raised aloft in such purity, that the human, the Elsa, appears hopelessly at fault beside him. But it is not so hopeless. Love demands complete confidence, and that Lohengrin could not give. Thus he had to return to his own sphere, the Grail, which could be opened to

us again only when the true meaning of this heroic and humane struggle against the conventional duties of the imagination had become clear to Wagner's mind, from the one philosophy which was capable of enlightening him on the subject. Had Lohengrin loved and embraced Elsa with supreme and generous confidence, and without any imposition not to demand her name, then, as Wagner asks in *The Communication* (I., page 335)—

“In this finite, physically sure embrace, must not the God dissolve and disappear? . . . Marvel, ye erudite Critics, at the omnipotence of human minstrelsy, unfolded in the simple *Mythos of the Folk*. Things that all your understanding cannot so much as comprehend are there laid bare to human feeling, with such a physically perfect surety as *no other means could bring to pass*.”

So we can understand the *Ring of the Nibelung* as the artistic realisation of this grand poetical idea where, in the person of Wotan, the conventional godhead renounces, for the sake of that purely-human love in which Wagner felt morality must lie. And now it became his task to reconcile this revolution in ethics with the sorely misunderstood religion of Christianity, degraded in our

day by the union of the Church with the secular power, but in a much more extended sense in the confusing of Christianity with Judaism, or, in other words, a pessimistic religion with an optimistic. In the broadest possible sense the distinction lies in separating the human from the conventional, in making conventional and human opposite terms and in only allowing the word "divine" to be synonymous with the human. So, in Feuerbach's words, we may interpret Wagner's idea up to the composition of *The Ring* and the writing of *The Communication* :

"God is love ; but because of His love of the predicate, it is that He renounced His Godhead ; thus love is a higher power and truth deity. Love conquers God. It was love to which God sacrificed His Divine Majesty. And what sort of love was that ? Another than ours ? Was it the love of Himself ? Of Himself as God ? No ! it was love to man. But is not love to man human love ? Can I love man without loving him humanely, as he himself loves if he truly loves ? . . . Who, then, is our Saviour and Redeemer ? God, or Love ? Love, for God, as God has not saved us, but love which transcends the difference between the Divine and human personality. As God has renounced Himself out of love, so we out of love should renounce God ; for it we do not sacrifice God



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to love, we sacrifice love to God, and in spite of the predicate of love we have the God—the evil being—of religious fanaticism.”

Most people of a scientific turn of mind are repelled by this abstract jingle; but the idea giving birth to poetry, and embodied in a great drama, is the reflex of a moral trend which does not belong to the methods of the crawling caterpillar.\*

The conception of “God” being banished from the region of Art, and more particularly so from the region of dramatic poetry, because it cannot develop, as is necessary to the Drama, a counterpart more substantial than itself, but remains once for all common property, otherwise the abstract idea of absolute goodness for each, it must become clear that if Christianity provides material for the Dramatic Art-work, then the sole standpoint lies in continuing it along the lines of the purely-human which Wagner foresaw at a comparatively early stage of his career was the guiding star of Drama in its completed form, *i.e.* with music. If this is the case, it may be as well to adopt the principle which Wagner accepts in his letter

\* See page 148.

to Heinrich v. Stein, the last letter from his pen. There he says :

"To speak of the things of this world seems mighty easy, since all the world can talk of nothing else ; but so to show them that themselves they speak is lent to few. To the world one can only speak when one shuts it completely out of sight. Who could address a Reichstag meeting, for instance, if he literally *saw* it? . . . How, indeed, could he go on speaking to people to whom everything is shadow, mere view without perceptibility? Show them the portraits of Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein, side by side, and ask them which of these two was the free hero, which the designing intriguer ; they point to Wallenstein as the 'hero' and Gustavus as the plotter, because it is their 'view.' But these uninteresting nobodies, how different they seem at once when a Shakespeare bids them speak to us again ; we hang upon their silliest words, these words the poet in his lifetime met by lofty silence. . . . And this is the essence of Drama, that is no form of poetry, but the likeness of the world reflected by our silent soul. Let these gentry of 'views' go on writing their plays by the hundred to mirror back their views ; they cannot mislead us if we seek our own way to the Drama by mastering the art, not of talking about man and things, but of letting them speak for themselves." \*

\* Vol. vi., page 328.

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Wagner in this letter has commended Stein's *Dramatic Sketches* because they contain this, the essence of Drama—viz., that the characters speak for themselves; and he draws attention to the answer which Stein put into the mouth of Solon in response to a question of Cræsus.

“Think'st thou, because I call myself philosopher, that I rate love and life as nothing worth? Nay, I know no surer truth than this. Whatever be the mighty secret at the back of things, the approach to it stands open to us in this poor life of ours alone, and thus our perishable actions bear withal such earnest, deep, and ineluctable significance.”\*

Apart from such an artistic elucidation, we, nevertheless, have always the intellectual with us, the persuasive. If it is admitted that the question of religion is the most pressing, then the method how to come nearer to this Christian religion which we have adopted in name, at the same time keeping hold of Wagner's *purely human*, is certainly the most interesting problem before us. In Wagner we have met with a man who is heart and soul imbued with the principle of Art, and that has been already designated as the antithesis

\* See footnote, page 329, of vol. vi. of English translation.

of the principle of officialism. In the former we may conceive the trend to Christianity bound up with a gradual discarding of forms and conventional decrees; in the latter a constant hugging of them, and an equally constant manufacture of new ones, when the intellect finds itself at a loss to substantiate its faith. So the individual stands in between two principles, capable of utilising his particular "free will," which implies responsibility, consciousness, and action, imbued with a moral principle, as opposed to a universal "free will," in whose power the individual remains but a tool, in spite of all intelligence. In opposing, in this sense, the artist to the official, the trend to Christianity would disclose itself to lie between two methods, both capable of being stated, and appealing thus to the individual intellect. One of these methods will be exemplified in a passage from a letter of Wagner, published in the *Wagner Lexicon*; the other may be taken from Cardinal Newman's *Apologia*, and *The History of My Religious Opinions*. Then every individual who possesses any intellect can decide—provided he knows anything about Christianity—which conduct more supports that doctrine. Each action must have influence

in one direction or the other. Both methods can only receive support by neutralisation, or by separate actions which are contradictory. We present the methods printed parallel.

WAGNER.

"Forasmuch as we without scruple reject church, clericalism, indeed the entire paraphernalia of historical Christianity, let our friends always keep in mind that this takes place for the sake of that Christ whom we wish to preserve to us in His full purity, in His absolute incomparableness and distinctness" (See *Wagner Lexicon*, page 317).

NEWMAN.

"I was confident in the truth of a certain definite religious teaching, based upon this foundation of dogma, viz. that there was a visible Church with sacraments, and rites, which are the channels of invisible grace."

"I submit to the universally received traditions of the Church."

There is something very suggestive in the fact that the same people who differ in degree regarding the acceptance of Newman's method are ready to join hands in order to ridicule that of Wagner. But a fair-minded person could not so quickly accept the one extreme or a diluted version of it, and banish the other as the hazy idea of a mind

scarcely worth listening to. Evidently the consideration of such methods from the intellectual point of view gives rise to the question of what constitutes fair play, and how disputes are to be carried on in a manner in which the facing and not the shirking of the question already decides of itself to which side the desire for fair play belongs. In any case the artistic mind cannot incline to accept the official view if Wagner is to have a voice in the question of what constitutes Christianity. And thus one may say that the poetry of Wagner, the delineation of the purely-human in dramatic setting, has led up on to a watershed from which every individual can intellectually judge that a given action serves either to develop or retard the growth of the moral spirit of the age which seeks to rationally justify its drift towards liberty. The official or the artistic? The Pope or Wagner? The issue has long been before the intellect. Never has it attained such clearness or significance as now; never has a genius thrown such influence into one scale as has been done by Wagner. Into which scale none but a dolt need ask and none but an egoist dispute.

## IV.

### WAGNER AS MUSIC-ÆSTHETICIAN.

BY DR. RUDOLF LOUIS.

THE following essay, from the pen of Dr. Rudolf Louis, appeared during the Bayreuth Festival of 1897 in *Die Redenden Künste*, a weekly journal published in Leipzig. It is not here translated from beginning to end, but nothing of importance is omitted. Some parts are only summed up by myself.

It should not fail to escape critics who insist on classifying Wagner among the obscure dogmatic thinkers that, by giving the case away at the very commencement, the result such critics have in view is obviated. Some people who have little else to do than oppose others step into the arena deluded by an idea that they themselves are previously and legitimately in possession of canons of Art, of criticism, and of philosophy, to which it is the duty of the artist, and even of a heaven-sent genius, to conform. Of course, every one who thinks knows that these canons are mere abstractions, and that each genius creates his own concrete laws. The anti-Wagnerian thus comes into the field convinced that he is armed with weapons whereby Wagner is to be demolished. Quite unconsciously, then, *at the end* of their demon-

strations, they may give away their own case. In the *Musician* Mr. Newman did this at *the end* of his article in No. 14 of that journal, in the words: "So that finally one has to sum up that his practice is not really contradictory of his theory, if the psychological origins of that theory be fully understood. The superficial contradiction disappears when we realise that in his use of terms he always meant something different from what other men meant by them; and that 'poetry' in his mouth never means poetry in the ordinary \* sense of the word, but poetry as unconsciously controlled by music." Well, to tell the truth, it is not even that, but poetry in the "ordinary" sense, in which a man is moved by some combinations of human circumstances, where the artistically conceiving subject is acted on emotionally by relationships among objects, and thereby driven to express himself as his genius compels. *We* will thus now, at *the commencement*, give away the case—*i.e.* if it is assumed, which is not done here, that Wagner has a fixed, ready, and absolute system from which point of vantage all others must be judged. The question, however, is not whether Wagner or any one else is absolutely right, but whether he is relatively more right than any other; and if we keep this relativity in view, we shall not fail to notice that he, of all men, possesses

\* This "ordinary" sense of the word is a thing far too ordinary for even Mr. Newman to explain. Poetry, to Mr. Newman, is verse which suggests something beautiful, drama a written play which has action. We consider, however, when a poet or a dramatist has his mind occupied, that he looks elsewhere for poetry and drama, than in books.



a claim to be heard on such matters, on account of his speaking from an intimate knowledge of Art ; furthermore, that the evidence offered by him comes from the man who is among others best equipped to enlighten us on the matter. If this is considered an unsound contention, then, when we see people elect to get their watches mended by shoemakers, and their shoes patched by watchmakers—in short, when we see people who are convinced that the best man to go to for information on any subject is a critic, and not he who has practically studied and mastered his own business—we will allow the theoriser *à la* Mr. Newman a voice before the producing genius.

So far, then, we understand the question to be not absolute, but relative ; and our endeavours before criticising are to find out the value of Wagner's capacity for contributing to the æsthetics of Music before that of others. Dr. Louis begins :

“It has probably already occurred to every student of Wagnerian literature how exactly that view of the widespread genius of the Bayreuth master, the main feature of his Art-work which the great public alone has regarded with any serious attention—namely, Music, and Wagner as musician—has received from commentators the most grudging treatment ; for example, we do not possess any musical analysis of Wagner's scores which render a higher service than the practical thematic guides, not to mention an even partially scientific monograph concerning the significance and nature of Wagner as musician.”

Dr. Louis now discusses why this feature has not received due treatment, and adds :

“ One way or another, the above statement cannot be disputed ; and this neglect of the musician Wagner is such a marked feature of criticism that it also spreads its pall over him as theoretician, in the sense that, although the Art-theories of Wagner have long since been discussed, explained, opposed, and defended, his views on the gist of the Art of Music have been strikingly neglected.”

Since this involves a rather fine distinction, Dr. Louis begs not to be misunderstood, and repeats :

“ Everything concerning Music as a phenomenon—its connection with the sister Arts in the united Art-work ; its relation to poetry and language ; in a word, the whole phenomenology of tone-Art, as far as Wagner has enlarged on it theoretically—has been long ago criticised. What is now left unnoticed, or, at least, has never been subjected to a searching and sustained criticism, is Wagner’s insight into the essence of Music, his metaphysics of tone-Art ; thus the kernel or foundation of his own and every other æsthetics of Music.”

The remainder of this introductory paragraph asserts that a proper recognition of the merits of one who did not class himself among the guild-æstheticians was not to be looked for from the occupants of chairs ; and although Wagner’s name may now receive respectful mention in some instances, there is still no proper recognition of the importance of his work. So far by way of preface.

“ As Goethe said once of himself that all his poems

were 'fugitive,' so might it be said of Wagner that he really only produced 'fugitive' prose works. If one surveys the long list of his theoretical writings, it will be found that they have all, with one important exception, sprung from circumstances more or less provisional, and keep in touch with the fundamental and comprehensive plan of those early prose works published, in quick succession, after the revolution of 1849. The condition in which he found himself at this period Wagner later described as 'abnormal'; 'such as may happen once in the lifetime of an artist, but unlikely to be repeated.' He had arrived at a crisis in his development where he felt himself urged, in the course of a more or less unconsciously productive artistic career, to stop short, because this course threatened to lead him into a *cul-de-sac*. From youth onwards Wagner had striven to attain an Ideal—namely, the realisation of the most complete Drama, that drama which opens up at once the most intensive and extensive experience to the whole-hearted man; he had sought this realisation within the frame of an historical Art-form—namely, the Opera—and soon had seen the impossibility of attaining the goal by this means. By continuous reflection to bring himself to a conscious understanding of his problem through inquiry into its conditions, he declared, was the object of these researches.\*

"In criticising and estimating the value of these views

\* Wagner's "egoism," about which we hear so much, thus gave rise to his desire to become clear on his labours. It is a pity a few more were not afflicted with a similar "egoism."

of music-æsthetics, it is important never to lose sight of the subjective character of the writings. I mean by this the fact that Wagner wished nothing more from them than the clearing up of his own state of mind ; that he saw the entire evolution of historical music in the light of his own personality and peculiar endowment ; that, in not proceeding philosophically from exact knowledge, but, as we may say, in running his own course, he is not only with complete consciousness self-interested, but, more than that, unquestionably he has the entire right to be so. That *Opera and Drama* at root is nothing else than a genial *oratio pro domo* has often been remarked, and rightly so ; but it would be unjust to reproach Wagner with it, since in its subjectivity lies the true importance of this side of his theoretical labours. There exists an æsthetical essay in the so-called classical period of our poetic Art which, apart from the fact that it exercised an influence, not to be underrated, on Wagner's artistic views, holds a correspondingly analogous position in the mental development of its author as does *Opera and Drama* in that of the Bayreuth master. I mean Schiller's treatise, *Über naïve and sentimentalische Dichtung*, in which he tried to become clear on the idiosyncrasy of his artistic character, and submitted justification for it to his great friend in Weimar. It follows that Wagner, in these writings, which he compiled from an inner stress, where his genius could only make itself clear in the language of abstraction—that is to say, where he is admittedly theoretician—stands nevertheless in a different relation

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to the science of music-æsthetics than that justly demanded of the pure theoretician and philosopher. Specially considered, it is not here Music which is his object ; the question concerning its essence and root-character is not the problem, pursued for its own sake through a purely philosophical interest. No ; the real theme of these great theoretical works is always none but himself, or, more correctly expressed, the 'doubtful situation' in which he found himself, as contained in the fact that he expressly wished to realise the complete Drama, under the firm conviction that this Drama was attainable ; but nevertheless, although equipped with the brilliant gifts of both poet and composer, he saw himself unable to attain his goal on the lines hitherto pursued—namely, as mere opera-composer. The three postulates which contain Wagner's whole theorising in these writings are : his peculiar artistic impulse, his peculiar artistic faith, and his peculiar artistic equipments ; the aim of his researches, his theme *sub judice*, is always how the exceptional position in which he finds himself is made impossible to him in following out his own course."

Dr. Louis having now clearly demonstrated that the value of these early writings, by which are meant *Art and Revolution*, *The Art-work of the Future*, *Art and Climate*, *Opera and Drama*, and *A Communication to My Friends*, lies in recognising their subjective nature, before extracting an objective philosophy from them, goes on, however, to point out two other writings which arose from an objective view of Music, as æsthetics.

“In contrast to this indirect kind of music-æsthetics, æsthetics as only means to an end, Wagner has taken the end itself in one of his later writings *A Contribution to the Philosophy of Music*, as he thus terms it in his preface to his essay celebrating the hundredth birthday of Beethoven. *A Contribution to the philosophy of Music*; that is to say, Wagner, so far as the question concerning the essence of Beethoven's Art is identical with the essence of tone-Art, expounds an æsthetics of Music wherein is considered the peculiar nature of the Art of *that genius* whom he calls ‘the true archetype of the musician’ (Ellis translation, vol. 5, p. 79). Here it is not any longer his own individuality which is the object and postulate of the research, but that of another—namely, that individuality which Wagner had honoured and glorified throughout his life with the warmest enthusiasm, in whom he had recognised the incarnation of Music. Allowing all this, even in this case it must be admitted Wagner's philosophy is not entirely objective. Allowing that Beethoven is the incarnation of Music, that he is the phenomenon of the absolute behind-the-veil of tone-Art, one cannot conceive this spirit attaining form without individuation: even if it is the spirit of Music which speaks to us whole-heartedly through Beethoven, it does so only through an individual character; and it is clear that any attempt to explain the essence, although never so convincing and comprehensive, must nevertheless necessarily be of the earth, earthy. Thus we need not wonder if the music-æsthetics of Wagner, as demonstrated in his *Beethoven*, in spite of its undeniably genial lucidity and

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penetration, is defective in its grasp of the kernel of the matter. Fortunately, Wagner himself, in the earlier essay, *On Franz Liszt's Symphonic Poems*, has provided us with the needed complement. In this case Liszt, as in the other Beethoven, is the direct problem, by means of which he regards the comprehensive problem of music-æsthetics. The productions of both masters disclose the spirit of tone-Art with unmistakable clearness to that eye which is capable of penetrating the veil of these productions ; but the problem evades us, the illumination of either one or of the other suffers eclipse as we try to solve, from the standpoint alone either of Beethoven's or of Liszt's Art, the question concerning the essence and peculiar nature of Music. One work supplements the other ; both make up one whole, the most important contribution by Wagner to the æsthetics of Music."

"One point common to all theoretical utterances of Wagner, never to be forgotten if one wishes to understand and do justice to his importance as æsthetician, is that he is *an artist* who allows himself to be heard on his Art. Just as the importance of these utterances consists in the fact that we, instead of as in the case of other æstheticians from without, get a glance now from within, since the artist himself tries to bring his unconscious knowledge of the nature of his Art before his own consciousness, so is it in this case sheer perversity to insist on weighing the utterances of an artist in the same balance as the productions of purely philosophical speculation, and to demand of them, as far as their conceptual wording and logical enunciation is concerned,

the same systematic exactness and currency which is justly demanded from the professed philosopher. Yes, I go so far as to assert that the value of the æsthetical confessions of an artist is neither materially assisted nor damaged by either the validity or the inconsistency of his postulates. The main consideration is that the pith of his communication is his very own experiences, something that has actually occurred, something concrete. The metaphysical footing on which he stands is not to him what the biblical imaginary world and Christian dogma is to the German mystic—that is, a medium by which to discant on the unspeakable, to elevate husk, form, and mere sentiment, into reason. And against any disadvantage—as, for instance, that this philosophical procedure only too often misses its mark, and instead of making the meaning of the artist clear, obstructs it—there is to be set the advantage that the truth born of the artist's pure intuition is protected from all attacks, on account of its perception. Whether Schopenhauer's metaphysics of Music are in part or entirely invalid, whether his hypothesis of the 'dream organ' is nothing else than mere speculation, that theory affects Wagner's music-æsthetics only superficially, although his philosophical treatise *Beethoven* is constructed on both of these doctrines. Wagner's significance rests in the material, not in the formal, in the contents not in the wording, in the concrete circumstance that we can rest assured the æsthetically philosophising artist is actually posted in his Art, in the matter about which he philosophises, not only superficially but substantially, not



only as a perception but as an intimate experience, not only as phenomena but a 'thing-in-itself'; in short, he must know what he is talking about, which is not possibly always the case with the professing philosopher."

Although Dr. Louis draws a distinction between the theoretical writings after the Dresden revolution and those written from Paris ten years previously, he maintains that already, during the earlier period, Wagner's principle of the relationship of Poetry to Music found expression, and that the principle corresponds with that of Schopenhauer's philosophy. We must, however, separate even the later writings into two, before we arrive at any influence on Wagner's mind by the theory of Music as expressed by Schopenhauer. There is, then, a unity of thought in Wagner's theory, in spite of the development it underwent, and this unity must be done justice to before its development is considered. Let us first of all state the principle as expressed by Schopenhauer before coming to Wagner's earliest expression of that principle. In the third book of *The World as I Will* we find, "One must not forget, however, in substantiating all of those cited analogies, that music holds to them no direct, but only an indirect relationship, that it never expresses the phenomenon, but alone the inner nature, the 'thing-in-itself' of appearance, the Will. It, therefore, does not express this or that particular and defined joy, this or that sorrow, or grief, or horror, or jubilation, or merrymen, or serenity, but joy, sorrow, grief, horror, jubilation, merrymen and serenity *themselves*, so to speak their essence *in abstracto*,

apart from all accessories, even motives. Nevertheless, we are at one with it completely in this distilled quintessence."

Is the language of Music abstract or not? In the above sentence quoted from Schopenhauer we read, *So to speak, in abstracto*, but on the very next page he says, "Music, when regarded as an expression of the world, in the highest sense a universal language, stands in relation to the universality of concepts as concepts do to material things. Its universality, however, is in no sense the empty comprehensiveness of abstraction, but quite another sort, and is bound up with a directly appealing image." It would appear as if Music fled from the sordidness of every-day life to pass through the hazy abstraction of the preacher and return purified of both materialism and vagueness, definite to the feeling, but not to the reason, comprehensible to all, intuitively but not reflectively apprehended. If we cannot grasp it, that negative fact arises from the other fact that it grasps us, and if this fails to convey its meaning it can be expressed again thus: that there can be no dispute around the abstraction Music as there is around the abstraction of the preacher. In short, Music transcends abstraction, or, as Schopenhauer practically expresses it, it stands to abstraction as abstraction stands to materiality. It, however, completes this in a circle, coming back to us, and not departing in a more and more diffused mystification. Dr. Louis now commences with the early Parisian writings of Wagner:

"The writings from Wagner's first period which are

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of special importance for our purpose are those novels and articles collected under the title of *A German Musician in Paris*, and among those chiefly the sketch *A Happy Evening*. Since his theory of the united Art-work does not concern us here, but only his music-æsthetics, we will not dwell on the otherwise well-known fact that, even in these early days, the aspiring master harboured the ideal of a reform of the Opera, by which that ideal should before all others become the true dramatic Art-work; indeed, he let his "German Musician" die in Paris in the same belief for which he himself assuredly did not die, but lived. It is of great importance for us that Wagner, however much he discussed a union of the Arts of Poetry and Music, is far removed from confusing and intermingling them, from ignoring their specific differences, or from attributing capacities to music which it cannot support. It is as impossible to fathom, much less to express, the content of the musical Art-work by human language, as it lies in the nature of Music to express definitely and fixedly what belongs exclusively to the organ of the poet. It is a misfortune that so many people give themselves the trouble to confuse the languages of Music and Poetry, and to attempt to replace or complement what, according to their narrow views, remains incomplete in the one, with the other. *Where human language ceases, there Music begins*, is a formula for all time (I. 140).\* The nature of the higher instrumental music consists therein that it expresses in tone what in word is inexpressible (II. 56).

\* These references allude to the German edition.

Music and speech therefore belong to different spheres: one can supplement or follow up the other, but never take its place, or be substituted for it. Opposed to language, whose province is that of specific phenomena, Music has a more universal quasi-abstract (ideal) character. All of this was (I. 148) expressed by Wagner in unconscious agreement with the completely unknown Schopenhauer: 'That which Music expresses is the eternal, the ideal; it is not the passion, the love, the longing of the individual in this or that condition, but passion, love, longing as in inexhaustibly complex excitations, which are embedded in the exclusive character of Music, but are foreign to and inexpressible in any other language.' Wagner is even at that time so completely disabused of the idea that there is any intermingling of Music's mode of expression with that of Poetry, that he feels himself compelled to reject with manifest exaggeration all tone-painting 'where it is not employed in the province of the jocose or in the reproductions of purely musical pictures' (I. 144).

"Since, however, it is not to be denied that outer poetical impressions can incite the composer to musical production, as is often made manifest by the poetic headings of such works, a question arises concerning the relationship of the tone-poet to those outer phenomena which incite him. 'If a musician feels impelled to design the most trivial composition, this happens only in virtue of the stimulating power of a sensation which overcomes him in the hour of the conception. This mood, let it now be kindled by an outer experience, or

let it have sprung from a mysterious inner source . . . in the musician, must assume invariably a musical figure and of itself speak in tones, before it can be produced in tones' (I. 146). The larger moods, which stimulate the musician to broader, more extensive composition, can be derived very happily from outer phenomena, 'but at that stage where they incite the musician to production also, these mighty moods have already grown within him to Music, so that the composer in the moment of his creative inspiration is no longer controlled by that outer experience, but by the musical emotion engendered in virtue of it' (I. 147). This *specific-musical* theory receives its positive endorsement in the following sentence; likewise pre-saying the Schopenhauerian vein of thought. 'The composer proceeds in a most notable sense as the philosopher, who only grasps the *Idea of Appearances*' (I. 205). For I believe Wagner wanted to say more than the above-quoted passage contains on the universality of musical speech; in fact, nothing less than that the musician is related to the concrete and individual objects of the phenomenal world as the philosopher to the empirical material facts given him by the separate sciences, in such a sense that he denotes and interprets their essential qualities, uplifted from all accessories. Music thus would hold itself to the other (plastic) arts as does speculative to empirical knowledge, noumenon to phenomenon, *thing-in-itself* to *appearance*. In these words is expressed the fundamental thought of Schopenhauer and Wagner which finds itself developed later in *Beethoven*.

A sentence from *Beethoven*, written thirty years after, may be quoted now, to show how Wagner regarded Verse during his latest period ; for it is really Verse which is meant here by Poetry. ' Moreover, the experience that a piece of music loses nothing of its character even when the most diverse texts are laid beneath it, shows the relation of Music to *Poetry* to be sheer illusion. . . . The union of Music and Poetry must therefore always end in such a subordination of the latter that we can only wonder above all at our great German poets returning again and again to the problem, to say nothing of the attempts ' (Ellis' translation, vol. 5., p. 104). And again page 112, on Beethoven's 9th symphony : ' We have already gauged the import of this choral portion of the symphony, and found it pertaining to the strictest field of music : beyond that said ennoblement of Melody we have in it no formal innovation ; it is a cantata with words, to which the music bears no closer relation than to any other vocal text. For we know it is not the verses of a text-writer, were he a Goethe or Schiller, that can determine music.' "

This, then, must distinctly show that Mr. Newman's assertion that with Wagner, just as with other composers, Poetry was dragged at the heels of Music, is no reproach whatever. There never was any attempt in Wagner's theory to base Music on Poetry. This erroneous idea has two sources, one the inability to see that Wagner always simplifies his terms in the direction of homogeneity, just as Schopenhauer tried to become clear about a fundamental energy to which all phenomena, from the

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highest genius to the moving stone were subject, before treating of it in its differentiations ; the other the prevalent shallow mode of thought which parodies an original idea, and thereby obscures its author's meaning. An example from another intellectual field may serve to illuminate the problem. There is probably no one who has not heard Darwin's theory described as "man descended from the monkey." Such nonsense was taken in good faith, but very likely if the converse, which is of course quite as undemonstrable, that monkeys were descended from men, had been put forward, it would have been treated with ridicule. Both are, then, equally absurd from the evolutionary point of view, because the diverging lines from homogeneity must eventually leave undeveloped the later stages of evolution in which both man and monkey first assume their characteristic forms. Thus, whatever the common progenitor of man and monkey was, it could not have been classed under one or the other. If, now, the inner stress of man to express his impression of the conflicting elements of life obtained form eventually in the shape of the *literary* drama or *epic* poetry, it is equally beside the mark to arbitrarily and exclusively attach the fundamental terms Drama or Poetry to one or the other. The common progenitor of man and monkey could not have its term attached to either man or monkey, and Drama is no more in any sense this stage play or that poetry, or painting, or sculpture, or whatever form the expression of man's artistic sense has now taken. But Music is the counterpart of original fundamental Drama, *i.e.* its concomitant, because

where the one has its roots in universal life, the other has its in the universal genius. Neither genius nor life has material phenomena as object. Drama can have only one meaning to Wagner, and to say that what he means by Drama is what no other person meant is just to play havoc with the real progenitor of artistic expression, no matter what specific forms have been evolved in our day.\* To resume Dr. Louis. "Music is the Art of tone ; thus every music-æsthetics must proceed from an explanation of the nature of tone, since in this material all musical creations are constructed. If we ask the scientist, who approaches the subject mechanically, about its nature, he will answer us : tone is a peculiar modification of the audible, a specific kind of noise, caused, as is every other sound, by vibrations in the atmosphere, whose regularity and proportions are pleasing to the ear on the one hand, and on the other interesting to the intellect by its capacity to respond with other tones in complex scientific combinations and harmonies. It is now characteristically in accord with Wagner's treatment of Art that he does not, like many music-æstheticians before and after him, proceed from this objective view of tone. He, more in harmony with his usual manner of regarding artistic expression, sees as the ultimate element of music only that phonetic ex-

\* Life is drama. Art may be dramatic in various forms, among which the Musical Drama comes back to the original, now artistically expressed, because it completes the necessary obligations of Art, and that is the most direct appeal to the feelings. But to all of us, to start with, Drama has only its dictionary meaning.



pression of mood which flows from the mouth of the disburdening individual; this anthropological tendency of his art-view assuredly attracted him in the first instance to Feuerbach. This tone (utterance), the real 'organ of the heart,' is the direct expression of the feelings, with which the inner man audibly reveals himself. Tone in its nature, so to speak in its soul, is that which equally inspires language, so far as we find in it expression and accent: in 'actually inspired tone' the vowel's content of feeling comes most undisguisedly to life, so that we can regard the usual (rhetorical) accentuation of speech to some extent as 'latent music' which when sung with words has been set free. Influenced later by Schopenhauer, he calls tone 'the direct expression of the Will,' and thus, since sound is the sole sensuous phenomenon and direct revelation of the will of man—in short, of all being, severed from the mediation of the intellect, this world of sound, of hearing, conflicts sharply with the world of light, of seeing. The world in which we customarily live assumes form in virtue of our conceptual capacity to construct objects from outer impressions, from the causes of impressionability as objects of extension in space. Apart from this customary world we know another, not indeed independent of it, but specifically different; the world of dreams. In this case it is not outer impressions which call forth presentments, for during sleep the brain is completely shut out from the outer world. It is rather our own internal life in dreams transposing itself apart from outer excitation into figures which recollections from the active world turn by

the brain into symbols and hieroglyphics. Just as during dream our inner nature, the will, out of its own resources creates a world independent of the mediation of the senses, so in phonetic expression (accent) the will is conveyed to the ear directly and without mediation. Therefore it can be said, the world of sound stands to the world of light as dream does to vigilance."

Dr. Louis now goes into the nature of the dream from which, on awakening, a person is given to express himself by a cry, and in this instance it is proved that the bond between a purely inner process, without external excitation, and the outer world, is tone or sound, otherwise there could not be any grasping of the nature of what was passing in the closed mind of the dormant individual without the ejaculation on awakening. Music, then, in a similar manner, produces to the ear the process going on within, the process at one with that motive power Schopenhauer has termed Will, which we can otherwise only cognise by stripping it of all conscious reflection. To resume the translation :

"Here we must pause to observe the unusual character and originality of the Wagnerian 'metaphysics of tone' in order to become clear on the subject. For we are concerned with nothing less than two fundamentally different views of life, whose irreconcilable opposition will be illustrated by a striking example. On the one hand stands what I have already called the 'objective view' of tone—namely, that that same quality in virtue of which it is originally possible for sound to become the material for tone-Art, a quality

which procures us the key to a knowledge of the peculiar nature of music, is identical with the physical nature of tone, which we have designated as sounds with vibrations of distinctive proportion. Wagner asserts with regard to this that sound is the material of musical Art, because we have the power through the sound of our voice to transmit impulsive feeling by expression directly to the ear of our neighbour. The originally fundamental element of music is not the objective physical sound with which material, as alien to, as it is unsympathetic with, our inner selves, the understanding comes finally to regard as a kind of occult concrete mathematics,\* but the subjective 'pathological' cry emanating from the breast of mankind itself. This it is which instils into music the self-sufficiency and mighty force of its effect, in which no other art can equal, much less surpass. As voice has developed itself historically out of the natural voice-expression of mankind, just as therein its origin lies, thus it must remain true to its own inner and proper nature, if it is to remain honestly in touch with that origin; if that natural element of the direct expression of feeling is, by means of the resonant tone, always the life-giving breath which pulses and circulates as true *primum movens* throughout the most complex organisms, musical configurations, as they appear to us mere outer phenomena, are not symmetrical, lifeless bodies like crystals,

\* Cf. the well-known saying of Leibnitz: "Musica est exercitium arithmeticae occultum nescientis se numerare animi."—*Leibniti epistolæ, collectio Kortholti*, p. 154.

but living *bodies* whose *soul* is just that elementary phonetic expression.

“When opponents have condescended to go somewhat closer into Wagner’s thoughts, the reproach has been heard from them, that Wagner’s music-æsthetics degrades tone-Art and deprives it of its intellectual nature to replace a fine art, attractive to the understanding by its many resources, by a mere nervous intoxication, which, with its æsthetic poverty, can scarcely elevate itself above the effect of a narcotic stimulant. This insinuation is as senseless as it is unjust, for, as we have seen, nothing is remoter from Wagner’s thought than the intention to take that elementary vocal expression from which he believes he must proceed in his attempt to fathom the nature of music as in itself ready-made ‘music,’\* or tone-Art; on the contrary, he maintains the real problem of music-æsthetics (so puzzling to the understanding) to be, that from an element of such purely ‘pathological’ nature as the subjective phonetic expression is, an Art could be arrived at which is the intellectual artistic deed of a human being, an Art whose nature consists therein, according to Schopenhauer, whom Wagner here follows, that the subject in regarding its object (the spectator interested in the show) is freed from the thralldom of the will, *i.e.* has become purely perceptive, purely discerning under total obliteration of all egoistic desire.”

Just one word may be allowed here to say that unless the critics of both Schopenhauer and Wagner

\* I ask the reader’s special attention to this.

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show themselves capable of understanding and applying this position of intellect to will, their shafts fall harmlessly outside the boundary of Wagner's Art-theory.

"Against Hand, who advances a similar view, according to which the nature of music consists in an expression of 'inner life, of inner expressions, Hanslick contends: 'According to this principle, the song of birds must be termed music, and, on the other hand, the mechanical musical clock not; while the truth is exactly the opposite.' But Wagner's theory would insist that neither the one nor the other is music in the true sense of the word: birds' song *not yet*, because it is a purely elementary act of nature and not Art; and the mechanical musical clock no more so, because it is *artificial art*, cut away from maternal nature, in which all musical demonstration must be rooted, if it is to be more than a lifeless, stiff, mechanical, crystallised artificiality—that is to say, if it is to be a living Art-work at all.

"We find, then, that Wagner's music-æsthetics differs from that of Hanslick's formalism in this, that the latter seeks the nature of music in what is common to all Arts—namely, the presentation of formal matter, elegant tone-structures which appeal to our intellect, while Wagner inversely believes it is not to be discovered in the fact that it is Art, but *tone-Art*; that, opposed to the plastic arts and the merely read literature of poetry, it constitutes, not dead, but living, animated matter called Tone—animated, that is to say, in so far as it is the means of expressing human moods. Wagner seeks the

*differentia specifica*, the constructive difference which, according to its manner of operation and expression, constitutes the character peculiar to music; he thus at least has rightly recognised the problem, which has not been so much as discovered in the music-æsthetics of his opponents. But Wagner's tracing' back of the essential in the operation of music to a direct expression of the Will is in a still more profound manner striking and important. For if we compare it with the explanation which Schopenhauer has given of the world as a whole, we see that Wagner's æsthetics is not merely influenced by that philosophy, but affords evidence of analogy and parallelism on the field of Art. That organ by means of which we grasp the outer side of things, the 'World as Presentment,' is, in its widest sense, the intellect. In a similar manner music, with its formal side, reveals itself to the understanding and reason, offering them regulated tone-compositions of uniform varieties. To perceive now the nature of music in this formal side of musical production, an object in the world of appearances as it is offered to experience, is a view analogous to that universal philosophy which holds the world for real only in so far as it is revealed to the knowledge of reason. Just as this philosophy must seek in the universal, in that which throughout varied forms and individuals is common to all, the kernel of all being, the *Essentia* underlying all existence—namely, all of that which reason is able to grasp and preserve as a concept from the many concretions of the real world, culminating in

Hegel's philosophy ; so formal music-æsthetics buoys itself up, in the hope that it has found the nature of tone-Art in that which music has in common with all other Arts, and is presented in its formal outer side to the understanding as the sole acceptable matter, just as every apparent object awakens an *à priori* illusive belief that reason can succeed by its conceptual theory in thoroughly comprehending its vital essence.

"And, in opposition to the manner of search invariably adopted by his predecessors, just as Schopenhauer taught us to find the 'thing-in-itself' underlying all existence, not in the universal, not in the Idea, not apart from us in the world of phenomena, but within us, in the Will, revealing itself to us directly without mediation of any discerning of the understanding which knows objects, so in the same manner Wagner sought to avoid proceeding from music as 'phenomenon, as form,' but proceeded from within ; in his own words : 'That which is peculiar to music consists in the select material in which it forms its compositions in Tone.' We can, however, only recognise and understand completely the inmost nature of tone if we learn what that manner of thing is, which, uttered from the mouth as natural sound, seems to declare itself at once to the feeling of other creatures ; namely, expression. The essential in tone, that quality which makes it possible for music to be accredited with its inmost peculiar resources, is its *content of expression*. In threefold regard, then, is the procedure of the music-æsthetician Wagner akin to that of the philosopher Schopenhauer, firstly in not seeking

the nature of Music in what is common to other Arts, but in what constitutes its specific difference, secondly in proceeding inwardly and not outwardly to specify this nature, and thirdly therein that he turns to account the results of the sole direct and un-mediated expression possible for us to make use of, for the fathoming of the nature of the objects of the exterior real world.

“Since, however, the most important problem of the philosophy of the world as Will is the clearing up of the relationship of the formal world to the ‘thing-in-itself,’ and in answering the question, How does the unreasonable Will become reason? we have to concern ourselves with the manner in which Wagner explains the arising of an Art out of that natural, original matter, tone, or in other words how he defines the natural relationship of the formal outer side of tone-Art to its own ‘thing-in-itself,’ namely expression. Music addresses itself in its formality to the intellect, which in music is the logical or the reasonable, that which corresponds to the ‘Idea’ in German idealistic philosophy; on the other hand that element which in music, in virtue of the natural expression of its raw material, possesses tone, corresponds with the Will; in the Schopenhauerian sense of the term the ‘thing-in-itself’; it (Will) is more than what is reasonable-in-life—namely, that which in reality procures life and conditions the peculiar power and character of its phenomena. We are occupied, however, with the question of the relationship of Will (matter) and Idea (form) on the particular field of tone-Art, a question Wagner has to answer if he will com-



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pletely solve his task of explaining the nature of Music ; and so much we may be assured of beforehand—namely, that his answer will correspond with the sense of Schopenhauer's philosophy which gives priority to 'Will' and only a secondary importance to intellect.

“Wagner takes the following theorem from Schopenhauer's philosophy to explain the problem of how it is possible for the cry, the pathological sound of nature, to become basis and material of an Art, for which, however, a knowledge purely intuitive and free from volition is postulated. ‘Our consciousness has two sides, one turned inwards, the other outwards ; in part it is a consciousness of *one's own self*, which is the Will ; in part a consciousness of *other things*, and chiefly then a *visual* knowledge of the outer world, the apprehension of objects. The more the one side of the aggregate consciousness comes to the front, the more does the other retreat.’” (See English translation of Wagner's *Prose Works*, vol. v., p. 67.) “As the plastic Arts belong to that outwardly directed side of consciousness, so Music belongs to that inwardly directed. The perception of the outer world, which arouses the zeal of the former Arts, of what we may call objective consciousness, becomes æsthetic artistic perception from the fact that the egoistic Will in us has been silenced, which makes it possible for us to regard objects of the outer world as ideas, *i.e.* stages in the objectivisation (realisation) of the Will as ‘thing-in-itself, *i.e.* objects freed from their individual conditioning by time and space. On the other hand, the inner side of consciousness assumes a

capacity to become the basis of an Art therein that it identifies, in the moment of its now inwardly directed acute perceptibility, its own content, the one will, with the profoundest essence of all phenomenal (formal) existence, and recognises this content as the 'thing-in-itself,' lying at the root of all appearances.

"Tone is thus the mediator of this knowledge-by-feeling which identifies the nature of all existence, to this extent, that hearing intuitively grasps, without any conceptual mediation, the intent of the audible tone, as if it were a *gesture expressed in sound*, thrust forth by an affection of the same Will lying at the root of all such appearances of intellectual life as self-consciousness acquaints us with. If we can regard the final aim of all artistic zeal and practice to be the dispersion of that illusion which presents to us individuality as radically different in its nature, and also those phenomena which the individual perceives, plastic Art obtains indirectly the dissipation of this illusion, in this manner, namely, that it makes it possible for the intellect, by the suspension of all relationship of the presented object with the perceiving subject, to raise itself up to a purely objective, *i.e.* disinterested, contemplation of the Idea, or of the form, in so far as that form is a characteristic expression of this fundamental will underlying all presented objects. It is otherwise, however, with music; by it, the illusion which prevents us from discerning the essential unity of existence is not dissipated by that 'most ingenious playing with that semblance' which plastic Art turns to account in purified contemplation 'to lay bare the Idea

concealed beneath'; but 'we can but take it that the *individual Will*, silenced in the plastic artist through pure beholding, awakens in the musician as the *universal Will*.'\* For, since the phonetic effect of the audible tone can transmit to our ear exactly what we, from the depths of our self-consciousness, utter to ourselves, the objective nature of the audible tone being identical with the subjective nature of the tone produced, music attains already, at its inception, in virtue of its raw material, viz. tone, that which is the final result of the plastic Arts in their collective demonstration—namely, the annihilation of the limits of individual will.

"Wagner felt himself impelled to say, 'I cannot grasp the spirit of Music otherwise than in love,' because of the tone, pregnant with expression, uttered from the mouth of the fellow-creature; because, again, of the entire phonetic nature, revealing itself to our ear as in its profoundest roots, being essentially at one with ourselves; and furthermore, because the forms of musical Art are not merely Art alone, but principally nature, since the individual will, which in plastic Art is silenced, in that of Music awakes as universal will. With the painter it expresses itself '*that means*'; with the musician, however, '*that is*.' If we are compelled, in contemplating the productions of plastic Art, to cry with Faust: 'A superb spectacle! But still, alas! a spectacle. Where can I seize thee, O infinite Nature?' so is this cry 'answered in the most positive manner by Music' (p. 70, vol. v.) The 'simile' in which plastic Art

\* See pp. 70, 72 of *Beethoven*, vol. v. of English translation.

alone can speak becomes in and through Music a 'matter of fact.' Thus other Arts do not stand on an equal footing with Music: the latter has been brought a step nearer identification with the real nature of all existence. While the other Arts seek to represent and copy ideas, otherwise stages in the materialisation of the Will-to-live, Music is itself an Idea of the world; as Schopenhauer recognised, it is a parallel marching along with the real world ('Art is always at its goal'); a 'second revelation of the nature of the world, it is that unspeakably tonal secret of existence.'

"If Music is then, in its essence, more than mere Art in the usual acceptation of the word, if it is not illusion alone, but actuality, the question arises, How does that moment enter into Music which ranks it, in spite of its fundamental difference from other Arts, in the category of Art? Since this moment of illusion, which happily illustrates and gives validity to the formalistic idealising and ornamentation of each Art, is not deducible from the nature, the in-itselfness of Music, that question becomes coincident with another, namely, How does the essence of Music become phenomena, that essence which we have seen to be the metaphysical unity of all being, an insight gained from that intuitively emotional comprehension of the natural expression of the audible tone?

"If we have to picture to ourselves the musician as a being to whom, in the moment of the highest ecstasy, the veil has been lifted which obscures to us the mystery of life, we must conceive this insight as one conditioned

throughout by feeling, and thus fundamentally different from all intellectual 'cognition.' The condition of acute perceptibility in which our own will recognises itself in objects apart from us is now clearly related with the dream, in which our brain, completely shut off from the outer world, is only sensitive to impressions of the inner world. As now the dream of the profoundest sleep, in which this sealing up of the brain against impressions of the outer world is complete, can only be retained for the awakened consciousness therein that it is conducted into a second 'allegorical' dream immediately preceding awakening—that is to say, a dream which employs equally as a symbol dwelling in the memory the phenomena of the real world in order to transmit indirectly that symbol which cannot be directly transmitted to the awakened consciousness—so 'for the direct vision of itself the Will creates a second organ of transmission, an organ whose one side faces toward that inner vision, whilst the other abuts on the reappearing outer world with the sole direct and sympathetic message, that of Tone' (p. 73). The second organ now is that of tone. We have accordingly to distinguish in it two sides, one inwardly directed, and one turned towards the outer world. Musical tone, with its inner nature, its vital breath, is 'expression,' and that reflex vision by means of which a being discharges an oppressive load by a cry is related in kind with that outer side whereby the musical tone is a production of Art, and in this manner not to be found in nature. The musician acquires the capacity by idealising and ornamenting the

original cry of pathological expression to communicate to the awakened consciousness his acutely perceived dream, in this manner, that the sound, now become tone, is subjected to one of these two forms in and through which our understanding has outer objects in their mutual relationship presented to it—namely, time and its laws.”

It need hardly be pointed out here that this theory of profound dreaming beyond all possible remembrance is pure hypothesis. It is meant thereby to establish a parallel with the total absence of intellect in the Will, a theory which people can verify for themselves by observing that where the Will affirms most brutally—namely, in the sexual act—the intellect is most completely obliterated. If now an act of intellect is needed to bring to our feeling an indefinite knowledge of essential likeness in the graduated scale of things—and this is the aim and end of all Art, except the Art of Music, whose object it is to do the same *definitely*—namely, to give us a presentation of *the* essential likeness of all things, it is not an unfair manner of sounding the depth of musical Art to hypothetically suggest a parallel for its aim and end which gives it as totally unconscious and non-intellectual a basis as is claimed for Will. At a certain point this non-consciousness becomes conscious, but only in the form of ideas, not of actual insight into the nature of each differentiated object ; only symbolising by striking an average, as it were, throughout graduated forms and artistically presenting that average to our perception. Will extracting itself by intellect from its

totally non-intellectual state through a faculty of perceiving points of likeness in all the varied forms—that is the intellectual state needed to the artist. Here consciousness asserts itself. The dream which remains in our memory just before awakening, needing a cry to give other beings any clue to what was passing in the brain of the dreamer—that is the analogy which Wagner, basing his theory on Schopenhauer, wishes for Music, so as to allow of it presenting the definite essential likeness of all existence. All points of difference, which is individuality, are dissipated. Man becomes sympathetic, altruistic, religious, in virtue of a power he now possesses of recognising that his ego is not the thing-apart, calling for its assertion at the expense of other things assumed as opposed to it. We now resume Dr. Louis without further interruption.

“If, in studying the invention of the complete musical Art-work, we examine what is usually called its form, it becomes evident that such a mere framework by no means belongs to the purer nature of music. In short, we see that music will only let herself be seen in forms borrowed from an aspect or utterance of Life, which, originally strangers to music, obtain, through her, their deepest meaning, as if through revelation of the music latent in them (Ellis, III., 246-7). Thus it becomes apparent that the true nature of music, which is not by any means to be presented in its purity, resembles a chemical substance known only in combination, and in this sense, form is for music no more than a condition for the possibility of its presentation. If, however, this

presentation is to effect an immediate impression on us, then such motions of life as serve to procure it formality must be as simple and elementary as possible—so to speak of a popular stamp ; on this account we see purely instrumental music develop direct from the forms of the dance and the march. Instrumental music remains so completely bound up with this formal construction, that any deviation which is not justified by the music is felt to be a caprice, and consequently ‘had to be avoided by the daring Beethoven himself.’

“If music is to fulfil her mission in expressing an intensified desire, for which it is adapted by the wealth of its resources, then it must eventually come into conflict with its elementary forms, which are too bare to deck the content it seeks to express. In such a case the modern musician, who has emancipated himself from the antiquated conventional form, escapes the danger of becoming incomprehensible to the hearer by devising what is not a mere string of musical pictures subject to a pattern imposed as a law for all occasions, but by an invention in accord with a poetical idea, which develops freely from its own ‘motived’ dependence. Therefore the combination of tone-Art with poetic-Art in such a united Art-work as the word-tone-drama is rooted deep in the nature of music and its development. It is the affinity alone which makes it possible for the musician to unrestrainedly avail himself, without wandering into mad schemes or vague formlessness, of all the technical amplifications and perfections of the means of musical expression, and of those wondrous innovations in



instrumentation, harmony, and rhythm with which the language of music has been recently enriched. Music in this combination proves itself, when compared with the sister Art, the highest, the comprehensive Art, which turns directly into living facts that which poetry suggests only when aided by the organ of abstract language. This it effects on the one hand by extracting the apparently deadened tone of the soul concealed in all appearances 'through revelation of the music latent in them,' as Wagner so happily puts it, and on the other the possibility arises for music to completely deliver its true self in expression, from the outer action provided by the poem, by which means the ideal and the real world of the musician's true dream amplify and supplement each other in virtue of their close parallelism. This is owing to the fact that music lays down what one may call a metaphysical substratum to the real world of the poet; but it must be remembered that the poet provides the musician with the 'intellectual forms,' the framework, the conditions of time and space, by means of which the figures of the tone-artist range themselves into a regular and thoroughly 'motived' whole, which satisfies even the critical mind and its logically valid claims.

" This need of letting musical and poetical Art amplify each other, leads on the one hand to the Musical Drama, and on the other to the Symphonic Poems of Liszt, to whom Wagner attributes, on the field of pure instrumental music, an importance analogous to that of his own reformatory endeavours. This quoted letter on Franz

Liszt's *Symphonic Poems*, by its disclosure of the complete difference of Liszt's procedure from that whose most genial representative is Hector Berlioz, possesses the merit of showing us how the false art of program music rests on a mis-conception of the purpose of instrumental music.

"In now turning to the single elements out of which music as finished Art is constructed, we find three such elements in Harmony, Rhythm, and Melody. What one may call the specific element, the in-itself of music, independent of space and time, freed from all restrictions and limitations of the world of phenomena, is Harmony. 'In the kingdom of Harmony there is therefore no beginning and no end; just as the objectless and self-devouring fervour of the soul, all-ignorant of its source, is nothing but itself, nothing but longing, yearning, tossing, pining!' It is pure essence, prior to all existence, mere potentiality, comparable with a universal chaos, before the creative fiat was heard. The other pole of this ur-element is exemplified by Rhythm, which, remote from the inner nature, to provide the intelligible, temporal, and special conditions, reaches to the plastic musician the hand of the awakening world of appearances. For 'by means of the rhythmical arrangement of his tones, the musician comes into touch with the perceptible, plastic world; in other words, in virtue of the similarity of the laws according to which the movements of visible bodies make themselves intelligible to our perception.' And just in this sense Music has manifestly taken its warrant for

existence as separate Art from its original connection with the art of dance.

"The third element, Melody, emerges from this antithesis, Harmony and Rhythm, wherewith Music attains first of all an actual state and self-possession. As one could call mere Rhythm the musical body without soul, so could one call pure harmony soul without melody. Therefore the melody is the 'one musical form'; 'without melody music is inconceivable'; 'music and melody are inseparable.' If, according to the poetical and frequently employed simile in *Opera and Drama*, Harmony is the bearing element which is impregnated by the fructifying poetical intent, 'in order to be moulded into a ready-made object according to the natural conditions of the female organism,' then melody is just this ready-made object, bred from the poetic purpose; a new-born being from the womb of Harmony which gave music to the light of day.

"If, then, these three elements, Harmony, Rhythm, and Music, can never be separated from each other, or are never able to be known without each other, so long as we have the idea of music in our minds, nevertheless, one or other can so predominate as to lend a musical tendency its specific character, as, for example, with Palestrina. 'Here Rhythm is nowhere traceable, save through the play of the harmonic sequences; as a symmetrical succession in time, apart from them, it does not exist at all. Here, then, succession (*zeitfolge*) is still so rigidly bound to that timeless, spaceless essence, Harmony, that we cannot

as yet employ the laws of Time to aid us in the understanding of such music. The sole idea of succession in such a piece is expressed by well-nigh nothing but the gentlest fluctuations of one ground-colour, which presents us with the most varied modulations within the range of its affinity, without our being able to trace a line in all its changes. As this colour itself does not appear in space, we are here given an image almost as timeless as it is spaceless, an altogether spiritual revelation; and the reason why it moves us so indicibly is that, more plainly than all other things, it brings to our consciousness the inmost essence of Religion, free from all dogmatic fictions' (Ellis, V., 79).

"The ideal extremes of music, its inner and its outer side, the one whereby it is purely expression of a mood, the other whereby it is a kind of concrete incomprehensible mathematics, are brought together in a Mozart, whose enormous gift for mathematics 'we find combined with an exceptionally sensitive nervous system and a heart of surpassing goodness, making up a wonderful duality'; in him the conflict of these two sides of music is still latent, an undivided unity — 'indifference,' to speak with Schelling; while 'the naïve method Beethoven had recourse to, in order to help himself along with addition, proves at once that the inner nature of music outbid his gift for the formal outer side, and in comparison with Mozart appears to be, so far as sensitiveness is concerned, a *monstrum per excessum*.'

"If a tendency springs up in music which completely ignores this inner side of music, nay, denies it, and

declares the formal outer side of the Art to be its nature; a tendency practically asserting that what is great in music is incomprehensible; a tendency unable to supply anything intelligible;—then we meet in Wagner its irreconcilable opponent. Such, we find, has its æsthetical representative in Edward Hanslick, who labours under the impression that he has found the real object of all the province of music in pure formal beauty of tone-play. Wagner opposed him by taking up the position that from the impressions of plastic Art an abstracted category of beauty could by no means suffice to explain all the works of our great music on the one hand, and on the other the power of musical specific impressions. The only æsthetic category which could find application for music would be the sublime, for, underlying it all, there is something unspeakable, eternal, immortal, which strives to attain plastic form; and in comparison with this absolute content of the Art of tone, the purely sensuous form is of no more importance for it than a condition of its existence, a mere trellis on which the plant mounts up.

“Having now sketched Wagner’s music-æsthetics in its rudiments, we must refrain from going further into details, for it would lead us too far. There remains only a word to be said about the significance to be ascribed to Wagner’s labours in this field.

“In Wagner there appeared for the first time a musician who, possessing sufficient general and philosophical knowledge, was able—no matter although Herr Schassler maintains the opposite—to translate into the

language of abstract thought an intuitive concrete knowledge of his own Art, which he, as genius and creative master, possessed. This fact, which made it possible for him to speak as music-æsthetician in the best sense of the word, to speak of music as he really and truly knew it, gave him a position high above all of those who have made the nature of music the object of their speculations; and if pedants and Philistines choose to assert that he was too much of an artist to keep the cool head and calm temperament necessary for scientific investigation, or that his fancy entrapped him at times into exchanging the measured tread of the cautious inductive logical process for a system of thought bounding boldly over obstacles, no future music-æsthetics is, nevertheless, conceivable that does not make its business to thoroughly assimilate Wagner's theory. Indeed, I believe that this science can only hope to attain any satisfactory results if it determines to build further on the critically revised fundament of the Bayreuth master."

## V.

### *JESUS OF NAZARETH—BUDDHA ("THE VICTORS")—PARSIFAL.*

A STUDY BY KARL HECKEL.

**W**E can distinguish three periods in Wagner's productiveness. The first was rounded off with *Rienzi*. I hold this to be specified by Wagner's words, "The first artistic Will is nothing else than the contentment of the instinctive impulse to imitate what most attracts." \*

The second period, whose beginning coincides with the revolt against the prevailing artistic vogue, comprises *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*. None of these pieces were selected arbitrarily, but, in penetrating deep into the heart, invoked from the artistic mind an interpretation and plasticity. The following words apply to them :—"In order to enfranchise myself from within outwards, *i.e.* to address myself to the understanding of like-feeling men, I was driven to strike out for myself, as artist, a path as yet not pointed me by any outward experience ; and that which drives a man hereto is Necessity, deeply felt, incognisable by the practical reason, but over-mastering necessity." †

\* English translation by W. Ashton Ellis, vol. i., p. 286. (Kegan Paul, French Trübner & Co.)

† *Ibid.*, pp. 308-9.

The third period comprises the dramas following *Lohengrin*. The master calls them, in his *Communication to my Friends*, "the period of *conscious artistic will* to continue on an altogether novel path, which I had struck with unconscious necessity, and whereon I now, as a man and artist, press on to meet a newer world." \*

That which Wagner had depicted in *The Flying Dutchman* in its broadest outlines he illustrated with an ever-increasing distinctness in *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. We may venture to extend words of his, concerning the needed unity of the sensuous content of the above works, till they cover the collective series from *The Flying Dutchman* to *Parsifal*. He designated this content, which could only be expressed by the word-tone-poet, as "*the purely-human, freed from every shackle of convention.*" †

While the unprejudiced hearer of the Art-work grasps the idea directly by intuitive comprehension, we may only flatter ourselves we clearly comprehend it when we have become conscious of the catholicity of the metaphysical content of all the dramas, from *The Flying Dutchman* to *Parsifal*, and only when that self-same content has become intelligible in the Art-work, which important religious dogmas and profound philosophical systems also attempt to render intelligible after this manner. Every attempt of the nature of an abstract statement is apt to over-reach the limit allotted by a journal, while a verification of the cardinal points, which are capable of providing the desired knowledge, is quite

\* English translation, vol. i., p. 366.

† *Ibid.*, p. 364.



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feasible. In this sense I beg to submit a study which endeavours to pass in review the plan of *Jesus of Nazareth*, and particularly the sketch of *The Victors* (*Die Sieger*) in their genetic connection with *Parsifal*.

To comprehend the figure of "Kundry" it is a most important matter to determine what she has in common with the "Magdalena" of the plan of *Jesus of Nazareth*. According to the description given by Frau Eliza Wille, in whose house at Mariafeld Wagner lived for some time, it was intended to portray Magdalena in his drama as governed by a vehement carnal love for Jesus. This intention does not, however, appear in the plan afterwards published. The first act gives us a Magdalena identical with the woman taken in adultery, and contains the exoneration as found in John viii. In the second act we learn that she had sold all her goods and handed over the proceeds to Judas Iscariot, the purse-holder of Jesus' followers. This second act plays by daybreak at the lake of Genneserat. Jesus is found sleeping under a tree. Mary of Magdala, kneeling at his feet and kissing the hem of his garment, declares her deep penitence and her pure love for her Redeemer. As Mary, the mother, advances, Magdalena beseeches her to plead her case before her son, for she desires to humbly act in the meanest capacity as servant to the community. Mary comforts her and sends her away. We meet both again at the end of the act, distributing on this occasion together bread and wine among the crowd. After, in the third act, Magdalena had observed Judas and overheard his conversation with the Pharisees from Tiberias,

she (Act IV.) comes to Jesus prior to the supper and asks Him, "Lord, what Judas broods, is that Thy will?" Jesus evades her gently with a motion of his hand. Apart, she prostrates herself and weeps bitterly. Later, she takes a costly flask from her bosom, again approaches Jesus, pours some contents on his head, washes his feet, dries and anoints them, under sobbing and weeping. Judas addresses her with the question as to why she had not sold the ointment and given the proceeds to the poor (John xii.). Jesus, however, reproves Judas for the reproach, thanks Magdalena, and then leaves her unnoticed. After the supper, she returns to the empty chamber, bursting out into violent grief; nevertheless, she has divined Jesus and His sublime mission; *she deems herself blessed in having served Him*. When Judas enters with the soldiers, she denies all knowledge of the direction Jesus and His disciples have taken. After a short conversation with Judas, she is arrested, so that as long as she is secured Jesus cannot be warned by her. As soon as she gets her liberty, she again makes a final effort to save Jesus. In the scene which shows us Jesus under examination by Pilate the plan provides that—"Pilate receives a message from his wife which urges him not to condemn Jesus, since a woman (Mary Magdalena could herself bring the message; Jesus' reprimand to Mary; she begs for forgiveness) had fled to her and convinced her by information that this Jesus was a just man." She follows Jesus to the crucifixion, and with the mother and John returns with the news, "'tis finished."

In the plan of *Jesus of Nazareth* Wagner allows

Mary to foreshadow to the disciples the significance of Jesus' death. After her question, "Lord, what Judas broods, is that Thy will?" when Jesus had gently evaded her by the motion of His hand, she never doubts any longer but that He is resolved to bear sacrifice, therefore we get her prayer for forgiveness as Jesus reproaches her for her intercession before the wife of Pilate. What Peter gives Judas to understand only at the hour of crucifixion, she first of all has earlier recognised—namely, that in Jesus' sacrifice lies His transfiguration, and not in any miraculous sign that Judas expected of Him. It is not to Mary Magdalene, who was able to understand Him without words, but to His disciples, that the explanatory words are addressed concerning his death, thus, when, in the third act, the words are spoken: "And before all men I will suffer death, for the sake of that love whereby I bring the world everlasting life."

The proffered choice to Buddha, "World conquerer" or "World overcomer," suggests to us the alternative which, according to Wagner's treatment of the plan, Jesus set himself—namely, "Son of David" or "Son of God." But we can scarcely fail to observe that the significance of any such choice reveals something much profounder than that doctrine of the teacher of Indian wisdom. To the first believers, "poor shepherds and husbandmen in dull subjection to the Jewish law," it seemed indispensable to prove the descent of Jesus from the royal house of David. This interpretation was not lost to Wagner. As descended from the most

ancient race, Jesus could lay claim to the supreme government of the world, and overthrow the unworthy Roman supremacy. But what He did was actually to throw off from Him the line of David. It was not by means of an earthly crown that He would be able to free mankind—His brethren—from their misery, but only in the fulfilment of His recognised divine mission. The people and the aristocracy, however, expected of Him that He would lead the Jewish people to the government of the world. Hence the horror of the people and the success of the persecution and incitements of the Pharisees, when Jesus in the third act announces from the steps of the Temple His true mission—namely, His nature as the Son of God—and the salvation of all people, and not only of the Jews, through him. From that moment on He knows that the people cannot inwardly comprehend Him. It is, however, of great importance for Him that at last He should succeed in making His disciples know this much. He could achieve this only by self-sacrifice. Thus the picture of that Jesus of Nazareth, which the poetic plan discloses, first of all becomes completely lucid when we know that what Wagner has left behind is no more than a sketch of a *Drama*. As in the case of all Wagner's works, we must search also in this one for the ways and means of the dramatist, if we desire to come to terms with the great aim Wagner had in view. Then we shall not fail to recognise also the agreement between the historically conceived figure of Jesus as we meet it in the plan before us, and at a

later period, where the poet of *Parsifal* represented it "as the incomparably sublime Redeemer, purified and rescued from all Alexandrine-Judaic-Romish-despotic misrepresentation." The decided influence that Schopenhauerian philosophy had on Wagner's view of life essentially advanced his deeper conception of the Saviour, which offers itself as the noblest example of what we "Bayreuthers" may venture to model our thoughts on.

If we find the opinion and doctrine of the first believers accepted beyond question in the poetical sketch with which we are at present occupied—namely, that Jesus was sprung from the house of David—we meet, later on, on the other hand, with a strong leaning to that view which would make out that Jesus did not belong to the Jewish race, since the inhabitants of Galilee were despised by the Jews on account of impure descent. At the same time, following the earnest advice of Wagner, we may leave this, along with all other historical aspects relative to Jesus, to the historian, in order to occupy ourselves solely with the picture of the Saviour.\* "The monstrous guilt of all this life, a Divine and sinless Being took upon Himself, and expiated with His agony and death. Through this atonement all that breathes and lives should know

\* "The blood of the Saviour, the issue from His head, His wounds upon the cross,—who impiously would ask its race, if white or other? Divine, we call it, and its source might dimly be approached in what we termed the human species' bond of union, its aptitude for Conscious Suffering."—*English translation*, vol. vi., p. 280.

itself redeemed so soon as it was grasped as pattern and example to be followed.”\*

These words of Wagner, which are quoted in order to understand the ethical import of the plan of *Jesus of Nazareth*, at the same time denote for us the fundamental idea out of which *Parsifal* grew, so that they appear well fitted to lead us into a consideration of the latter. If, however, we remember that both Schopenhauer and Wagner arrived at their own philosophy of life by way of Brahminism and Buddhism, it may not be amiss to dwell for a moment on Indian wisdom, so that we may discover again in *Parsifal* certain impressions which are gleaned from this source. Among others, then, we shall recognise that the first suggestions toward the conception of Klingsor's garden are traceable to Indian sources, which I will not omit to narrate when the closer consideration of the sketch of *The Victors* claims attention. This sketch is to be found in the posthumous papers published under the title, *Entwürfen, Gedanken, und Fragmenten*. It was first written down at Zurich on May 16th, 1856. I have to thank a generous-minded lady, who was a friend of Wagner's (exhaustive information on the subject of Wagner's troubles in Paris was published in the *Memoirs of an Idealist*), for the appended information as to how Wagner took his material for *The Victors* from a narrative in Bournouf's *Introduction a l'histoire du Bouddhisme indien*. She writes: “Wagner, like all other poets, was most probably directly inspired by a material

\* English translation, vol. vi., p. 203.

text, and in this special case of Buddha, by that important narrative which, however thin, in his giant's mind assumed the most sublime, philosophical, and poetic proportions."

The characters of the sketch are *Chakya-Muni*, *Ananda*, *Prakriti* (their mothers), Brahmins, disciples, people.

Buddha, as is well known, is a typical name, and signifies "He who is awakened to knowledge," "The illuminated." Whenever Buddha is mentioned, the above-named Chakya-Muni, of the race of Chakya, the founder of the religion which had its origin in Brahminism, is meant. Ananda is his first and most faithful disciple, and regular attendant on his wanderings through the land. According to the prevailing doctrine in India previous to Buddha, it was only possible for the Brahmins to become saved, while to the devotees of other castes the only hope of reward for good was left for them in re-incarnation as Brahmins. Far below these other castes there stood the Pariahs and Tschandalas, with which the Brahmins were strictly forbidden ever to come in contact. Chakya-Muni arose as the liberator of these pitilessly degraded and mercilessly rejected. Wagner's drama is supposed to play during the time of Buddha's last wandering. It was intended to represent the Tschandala girl Prakriti as deeply in love with Ananda, and to let us see her overcome and torn by agony of soul, owing to the most extreme disappointment in love, while Ananda is again moved to tears with anguish. We are led to compare the scene between Parsifal

and Kundry in the second act of *Parsifal*, as well as the dramatic construction, disclosed in the sketch before us. "Prakriti comes to Buddha at the gate of the town beneath the tree, to request of him union with Ananda. He asks her whether she is ready to fulfil the conditions of this union. Ambiguous dialogue, directed by Prakriti towards a union in the meaning of her passion. She falls with sobs crushed to the ground, on hearing finally that she must share Ananda's oath of chastity."

During the further course of the drama Buddha was to have answered the reproaches of the Brahmins relative to his intercourse with a Tschandala girl, and also to his attack on the spirit of caste. In any case, the story of Buddha concerning Prakriti's existence in an earlier birth would have attained an important dramatic significance, because then, as daughter of a Brahmin, she, having repelled the son of the Tschandala king, and out of pride and haughtiness having insulted the unfortunate lover, it became now her fate to be reborn an Tschandala girl, "in order to undergo the agony of a hopeless love : at the same time to renounce and be led by complete redemption into the community of Buddha." Indian legends tell us of many conversions which Buddha effected by urging on the unfortunate how all their suffering necessarily was nothing else than consequences and expiation of sin committed during an earlier birth, and that just this expiation led them on the way to salvation. Prakriti also declares herself ready, in Wagner's sketch, agreeing with the narrative of



Buddha, to take the oath demanded, by answering his question with a joyful "Yes." She is then greeted as sister by Ananda. Buddha was to announce once more his last doctrine, and, after all had confessed their allegiance to him, he was to withdraw to the place of his redemption.

If we compare Wagner's sketch with the narrative contained in Bournouf's rather lengthy work, we discover an almost complete agreement in the treatment of the action. The ambiguous dialogue under the tree at the town gates is of itself of essential importance for the legend. It runs with Bournouf as follows: Buddha puts Prakriti's desire for Ananda and her excited state of mind to use for her conversion by addressing several ambiguous questions to her, which she interprets in the sense of her passion, while he propounds them in the sense of his religion. Then he gradually draws from her an acknowledgment of her own nature, and succeeds in arousing her to find consolation in asceticism. He asks whether she is ready to follow Ananda—*i.e.* whether she will follow his example. Following this, whether she chooses to wear his clothes—*i.e.* whether she will put on spiritual raiment; and so on. Bournouf seldom lets the legend speak for itself; in most cases he reproduces its contents in a curtailed form. Buddha's narrative of Prakriti's existence in a former birth now underwent essential change in Wagner's sketch. In the legend, where the proselytic tendency is strongly accentuated, it was not Prakriti, but her father, a haughty Brahmin, who, without her knowledge, had rejected the

suit of the Tschandala king. Since the Brahministic religion does not tell us of children being involved in the guilt of the father, Prakriti's sin, conspicuous in Wagner's sketch, is wanting in the legend. This reconstruction by Wagner the dramatist takes place completely in the spirit of the Buddhistic mythos; indeed, I might say that Bournouf's version of the Indian legend, as is the case with many others, is varied for practical purposes. I mean thereby that it has become proselytic, and that Wagner, by reconstructing it poetically, revealed it again in its original form. The legend in the form reproduced by Bournouf aims, above all, at ridiculing the falseness and intolerance of the Brahmins, and therefore the thorny dialogue between Prakriti's father and the Ischandala king is certainly more serviceable for this purpose than a conversation on the psychological pattern between him and Prakriti herself. The reconstruction of the legend by Wagner concerns just exactly the point which a comparison of the Buddhistic sketch with *Parsifal* shows to form the main interest of both. The sin to be expiated in Prakriti's case, as well as in Kundry's, finds expression in the jeer before a sufferer. Sensuality and desire prove themselves to be the obstacles which delay the redemption, and Ananda's and Parsifal's triumphant withstanding along with the supremely overriding compassion, prove themselves to be the unbarring of the way.

But that which was to be attempted in the sketch solely within the distinct limits of historical conditions now comes to light in *Parsifal* as the pure human nature

relieved from all conventions. The individual fate of the one in the former case must not only be extended in the latter to a comprehensive catholicity, but also the truth of everlasting justice, appearing only imperfectly in the historico-religious covering of Buddhism, is, in the Art-work *Parisifal*, forced on the mind in luminous transparent wrapping.

The doctrine of Metempsychosis, common to Indian religions, informs us that mankind has to suffer, and thereby expiate here in this world all the sufferings allotted to breathing life following on re-incarnation. The innermost soul of a living body, its *karma*, is not destroyed by death, and seeks after the decay of the individuality another habitation for itself, wherein to take up its abode. In virtue of this incarnation the quality of the *karma* acts decisively, the quality by which, equally in all good as in all bad deeds, every career is correspondingly modified. "Just as the *karma* belongs to good or bad quality, *the fate of man is determined*, so that the one is placed low, the other high; the one suffering, the other happy" (Buddha's words).

It should be the task of a future philosophy to be guided by the esoteric doctrine of Buddhism, "namely that of Palingenesis—as the genius of Schopenhauer recognised it—from the deepest soundings of physical research up to the loftiest heights of metaphysical knowledge, and to associate the theories of natural science with the wise doctrine of *karma*. We may, however, be permitted to see prophetically in the picture created by Wagner, that meaning which no philoso-

phical system can ever succeed in teaching us perfectly, and religious allegory can only suggest symbolically. And Wagner's saying may recommend itself to us—namely, that there “where Religion becomes artificial, it is reserved for Art to save the spirit of religion by recognising the figurative value of the mythic symbols which the former would have us believe in their literal sense, and revealing their deep and hidden truth through an ideal presentation.” \*

The frequent characterisation of Kundry as a “female Ahasuerus” affords us but little enlightenment. For the legend of the Wandering Jew tells only of a death-like sleep, without trying to utilise this for any deeper-lying truth. His person is not subject to alteration. The Flying Dutchman may be compared with him, but not Kundry.

The truth (most ably recognised by Buddha) that only the individuality is destroyed by death, that, however, our real being, so long as it affirms itself as Will-to-live, seeking a new incarnation, must assume a new individuality; this belief Kundry represents to us in marvellous fashion. The philosopher attempts to explain to us the persistence of being, in spite of all change among individuals, in this wise, that he asserts just as sleep lies between the man of yesterday and of to-day, so death lies between the past and the present incarnation. The artist also employs this parallel. Kundry laments, “Couldst thou know the curse which pulses eternally through existence, steeling me to re-

\* English translation, vol. vi., p. 213.

newed sorrows, through sleep and wakefulness, death and life, pain and laughter!" Before this, when awakened by Klingsor's incantation, we have heard the words sleep and death alongside of each other. She blurts out abruptly and impetuously, as if attempting to regain speech, and interrupted by interjections, such words: "Dark night, madness, rage, grief, sleep—sleep, deep sleep, death." To Klingsor's question, "There, it was another who awakened thee?" "Ha!" she answers, "Yes, my curse! Oh! yearning, yearning!" The orchestra, with the motive of the Saviour's Lament, tells of the goal of her yearning, while Klingsor makes the words imply a confession to sensual desire for the Knights of the Grail.

"Rest, rest! ah, for the weary! To sleep! Oh that none awakened me! No, not to sleep! Horror seizes me. Helpless refuge! The time has come. Sleep, sleep, I must!"

The fear of being awakened out of the "death-sleep" by Klingsor is expressed in such words, or in a deeper sense in the curse which "pulses eternally through existence." "Rest! ah, rest for the weary!" This can never be offered her by the death-sleep, *i.e.* the death of the individuality, the transposition of the individual without the annihilation of the Will, but solely by means of the "eternal sleep," the redemption from dying and living, from death and incarnation. Therefore she complains, "Oh, eternal sleep, sole salvation, how art thou won?" Klingsor's words, "Thy master calls thee, nameless one," apply directly to the trans-

cent being whose nature is characterised by the immediately following names: thus, "she-devil; hell's rose." Her being has appeared in various forms of individuality. Klingsor does not appear to mention them all, as he proceeds, "Herodias thou wast and yet more. Gundryggia in that place; Kundry in this."

Hans v. Wolzogen, and, following him, Löffler, having studied the question, explain the meaning and choice of these names. The original legend of Herodias is treated thus by Löffler. "Herodias was consumed with passion for John the Baptist, to which he did not respond; when she is wishing to cover with kisses and tears the head brought on the platter, it shrinks back and blows fiercely out a blast of air; the unfortunate female is driven forth into space, and roves around without respite; only from midnight to cock-crow does she sit lamenting on oaks and hazel shrubs." According to Wagner, now, this occurrence with the Baptist is changed into one with the Saviour Himself, but at the same time the name Herodias is retained. This occurrence with the very Saviour which Kundry relates, "I saw Him and laughed; then His eye lighted on me," would be the one and only cause of her eternal torture, just as in the sketch for *The Victors* that torture, as Prakriti's special sin, lies in the rejection of the lover!\*

Löffler says, "The names change—Herodias, Gundryggia, Kundry! The substance remains the same." I

\* This might be compared with the scene, Ibsen's John Gabriel Borkmann, where he is reproached with shutting out the heart that loves.—TRANSLATOR.

should like to replace that by "The individuals change (and thus the substance); for example, Herodias, Gundryggia, Kundry; the being remains the same." To corroborate this view of the question, the following passage may be cited. Gournamanz (*loq.*): "Yes, an outcast she may be; she lives to-day perhaps renewed to expiate the sin of a former life." That "laugh" of Kundry we must not take up only as the laugh at and insult to the individuality of the Saviour, but directly as the expression of the lust of a relentless appetite. Her being, burning for lust, "the source of damnation," is perpetually attaining new individuality. In spite of "sleep and wakefulness, death and life," the nameless one, the ur-devil, hell's-rose, sins without ceasing on account solely of the nature of her being. "The poetic wonder is the highest and most necessary product of the artist's power of beholding and displaying. Such a poetised wonder, which is in no wise taken by the beholder *for a wonder* (*i.e.* miracle), but apprehended as the *most intelligible* representment of reality,"\* is employed by Wagner, since he utilises the remembrance of events in an earlier existence, disregarding the circumstance that the possibility of remembrance has been robbed for ever by death. Thus just in keeping with Buddha's narrative of Prakriti's earlier existence, Kundry connotes the sin committed in earlier life, and Klingsor denotes the names of the former being.

The ideality of time and space should certainly not be left out of account in any elaboration of the above.

\* English translation, vol. ii., pp. 214-16.

That ideality has been presented, in the first and third acts of *Parsifal*, to the perceptive faculty. Its object is to bring this poetised wonder, the domain of the Grail, before us as the domain of absolute ideality.

For the interpretation of an Art-work by abstract conceptions we must never fail to demand a very necessary exercise of caution, realising that the import of a truly artistic work cannot be reproduced in an abstract manner, but only intimated, since Art strives to represent in living form that very thing which the abstract conception proves itself in its attempts incapable of grasping. He who disregards this will be, on the one hand as little able to defend himself from the reproach of superficiality as on the other, he who thinks he destroys the meaning of religious allegories with shallow rationalism. As regards the doctrine of Palingenesis, I should like to draw attention to this—namely, that it would be unsatisfactory to deduce the guilt of Parsifal which calls for expiation solely from his negligent conduct on viewing the grief of Amfortas, so long as the words of Parsifal demand of us a somewhat more searching study. “Ha! what sins, what debt of outrage must burden, since ever, the head of me, fool, that no repentance, no expiation, releases me from blindness.” Also the following words, which Gournamanz later addresses to Parsifal, as he sprinkles his head with water from the holy spring: “Blessed be thou, pure one. By means of what is pure be ye absolved from every burden of sin”—appear to be equally an answer to that above outbreak of pain from him who is appointed King of the Grail.



Now for the first time is Parsifal cleared of guilt, and redeemed. In this regard he is unlike Jesus of Nazareth, who had not to tread the "path of error and suffering." "As the Saviour himself was recognised as sinless, nay, incapable of sin, it followed that in Him the will must have been completely broken ere ever He was born, so that He could no more suffer, but only feel for others' sufferings." \* Such words of Wagner apply only to Jesus, and not to Parsifal. The latter in this respect is only, as in many other cases, comparable with Chakya-Muni, who also is enlightened by pity and thereby became Buddha. Chakya-Muni was born, according to the legend, as son of the King Sudhodana, and received the name Sidhattha; nevertheless, he is oftener called, relative to his descent, Chakya-Muni and Gotama. Wise Brahmins declared to his father, Sudhodana, that the Prince would distinguish himself as a most powerful king if he did not become a hermit. On asking how this was to be avoided, they answered that the Prince must not see four things—namely, no old, decrepit man, no sick man, no dead man, and no hermit. Despite all care of the father, the Prince saw one day a man bent with old age; he was horrified by the transitoriness of human strength and beauty; he saw a sick man, and inmost pity seized him; he saw a dead man—deep sadness overcame him and all enjoyment of life departed. When he saw, however, the peacefulness and happiness of a hermit, he threw aside glory and riches in order to submit himself to all sorrows and trials, impressed by but

\* English translation, vol. vi., p. 218.

one wish—namely, to become Buddha and saviour of all such existence as is subjected to desire and pain, birth and death. Furthermore, the trials which he surmounted in the consciousness of the apprehended and recognised misery, recall Parsifal's denial, made possible by the power of compassion.

For our purpose we will take special note of the temptations and attacks by which Mara (comparable with Klingsor) tries to seduce and overcome the Bodhisat. Bodhisat means "he who strives toward the Buddhahood," and thus designates Buddha prior to the time when he had become "the perfected." As he was sitting under the sacred Bodhi-tree, Mara tried to seize him from behind ; but the blending beauty of the Bodhisat dazzled Mara's eyes and obstructed his movements. He now tried to destroy his enemy by the help of the powers of nature. He invoked a powerfully raging storm, which uprooted the strongest trees and tore lofty columns of rocks from their foundations. The storm in the neighbourhood of the Bodhisat dwindled to a refreshing breeze, which did little more than rustle the leaves of the sacred tree. The Bodhisat remained in undisturbed peace and majesty, like the unclouded sun at noon. Then Mara let loose a fearful thunderstorm ; but neither the lightning which accompanied it, nor the raging floods, consumed the Bodhisat—he was only refreshed by a light shower, and smiled as happy as the silver light of the moon in the clearest of skies. Mara seized stones and rocks of mighty circumference and dashed them at the Bodhi-tree to destroy him who was striving for the

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Buddha-hood—he had sharp swords and pointed darts rained down on him; but the stones and rocks, the swords and darts, were changed into buds and blossoms, wreaths and garlands, and fell as friendly bouquets before his feet. The countenance of the Bodhisat was comparable to a golden mirror, from which the deep peacefulness of his soul was reflected; his eye was as undimmed as the petals of a water-lily. Mara sought to destroy him by fire, but the burning coals which were meant to injure him changed into costly rubies as they came near the tree; the glowing ashes became scented sandal-powder, the fiery sand became pearls, the smoke which was to have enveloped him in darkness and smothered him dissolved before the brilliance of his appearance like early mist before the rising sun. Now Mara incited his whole myrmidons against the Bodhisat. He himself mounted his elephant, swung his fearful scimitar, and heaved it with all the force he could summon against the Prince. This weapon could cut through cliffs as if they were slender bamboos; but in spite of all, Mara was not able to wound this Prince who was endeavouring to attain the office of saviour. In virtue of his high merits the weapon flew slowly, like a withered leaf, through the air and *hung shining above the Bodhisat's head*. He put out his hand toward the earth; a mighty thunder began, and fire-bolts arose from out of the ground. Mara's followers fled: he himself was hurled to the ground, and was compelled to acknowledge the Bodhisat's superiority. The daughters of Mara, named Desire, Unquiet, and Lust, undertook one

more attempt. They changed themselves into the forms of six hundred beautiful maidens of various ages, and dressed themselves so that their appearance would work seductively; then they approached the Prince, praised his beauty, flattered him, and coaxed him with all sorts of questions. But the Bodhisat did not regard them, and after they had in vain tried for a long time by their seductive arts to entice him, they flew away as well.\*

It is scarcely necessary to draw attention to the parallelism of the case of the hurling of Mara's weapon with that of the sacred spear, or the daughters of Mara with that of the flower-girls in Klingsor's garden. But it might not be uninteresting, were this a more extended study, to compare the redemption of Kundry with those legends which narrate how Buddha received in the community at its founding, Pragapati, the faithful guardian of his childhood, and Yasodhara, formerly his wife. "Are the teachers of mankind solely in the world for the purpose of saving the men? I tell you the highest wisdom is revealed to the women as to the men." Richard Wagner's article *On the Womanly in the Human Race*, in the course of writing when death took him from us, mentions the circumstance that Buddha at first rejected all knowledge of the possibility of the salvation of the woman, and concludes the fragment with the words, "It is a beautiful feature in the legend that shows the Perfect Overcomer prompted to admit the Woman." †

I might state the purpose of this study to be an

\* From Spence Hardy's *A Manual of Buddhism*.

† English translation, vol vi., p. 337.

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inquiry into incidents which may serve to afford us some knowledge of the unity of the metaphysical content, or better, the content of feeling in Wagner's dramas. If we now observe how, since 1886, in Bayreuth a gradual realisation of the possible representation of the entire dramas has begun, which in the year 1891 has attained, with the three works, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan*, *Parsifal*, the highwater-mark of the metaphysical-religious life-view of the artist; then the question as to the unity of the content must so re-occur to us as to suggest further that we conclude our study with such words of the master as submit to us an answer to this question. He says: "That which, as simplest and most touching of religious symbols, unites us in the common practising of our belief; that which, ever newly living in the tragic teachings of great spirits, uplifts us to the altitudes of piety—is the knowledge, given in infinite variety of forms, of the need of Redemption." \*

This we have to denote as the middle point, if we want to represent to ourselves the bond of unity and the ever wider-reaching importance of the dramas of Wagner under the figure of concentric circles. We recognise this, then, in Wagner's first dramas, in which it was expressed with unconscious necessity, as well as in the later works, in whose conscious artistic willing it discloses itself to us. Its voice is heard in the sorrows of *The Flying Dutchman*, and again it comes forth out of other figures, with other words, in other tones, most powerfully in the struggle for the soul of *Tannhäuser*,

\* English translation, vol. vi., p. 249.

in the death-longing of Tristan, and then finally in *Parsifal* to attain its true satisfaction in the scarcely audible words, "Salvation to the Saviour!" Scarcely audible to our ears, yet they are distinct to the listener at Bayreuth, but not, amidst the din of the world, to the bustlers. It is there, not here; to such listeners, not to the world;—that the truth is so touchingly expressed—that truth, namely, which Wagner felt so keenly. "In solemn hours, when all the world's appearances dissolve away as in a prophet's dream, we seem already to partake of this redemption in advance; no more then tortures us the memory of that yawning gulf, the gruesome monsters of the deep, the reeking litter of the self-devouring Will, which Day, alas! the history of mankind had forced upon us; then pure and peace-desiring sounds to us the cry of Nature, fearless, hopeful, all-assuaging, world-redeeming. United in this cry, by it made conscious of its own high office of Redemption of the whole like-suffering Nature, the soul of Manhood soars from the abyss of semblances, and, loosed from all that awful chain of rise and fall, the restless Will fails, fettered by itself alone, but from itself set free."\*

\* English translation, vol. vi., page 249.

## VI.

### *THE SYNTHETIC PROPOSITION A PRIORI.*

I HELEN — — — —, \* 22 years of age, †, fair hair, blue eyes, merry disposition, good teeth, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, well-developed figure—to cut personal description short, loving and loveable;—seem to have been sent into this world with a birthright which threatens to play sad havoc with one and all of these charms. I am fated to carry around with me a burden, unconvertible into the current coin which procures supply to meet demand. I feel as if I were the owner of an empty title, a penniless Duke, or as if I were in the midst of a desert, very thirsty, with only a priceless diamond in my possession. My fate is a constant, pressing desire to put a question, which never shapes itself in words. I am involuntarily pursuing this desire when awake, and when I slumber it remorselessly pursues me, weaving itself through the most fantastical of dreams. This desire, then, to propound an apparent impossibility never loses hold of me, and no sooner do I congratulate myself that I am soon to express intelli-

\* I am obliged to suppress my other four aristocratic names, to save my connections from the disgrace they attach to my democratic ideas.

† I am now a little older.

gibly what I want to ask, than the stammering attempt which escapes from my lips forces me forward into new horrors, which are worse than the earlier horrors of conscious incapacity. Would that some else could only formulate my question for me, or even be bitten with a similar desire to get an answer to what, under no circumstance whatever, has yet arrived at the stage of utterance. With me it is always a case of *Why, Why, WHY!* And with others it seems to be quite the opposite. They are all so certain on matters which to me are even impossible to state. Just that hidden, inexpressible thing which I, with an eager, burning heart, cannot even formulate, seems to be to other people of no further concern, probably because they are so satisfied with what they take and get. Their complacency, if contrasted with my inquietude, their absence of a sense of responsibility contrasted with my awful sense of responsibility and my hesitation to even affirm a mere trifle without ransacking every available source of proof, makes up, I firmly believe, the sum of my incapacity to utter what I want.

I only arouse ridicule if the pressure of my perplexity drives me into attempts at interrogation. Thus my eagerness never excites sympathy, but only condemnation and ridicule. Why is this the case? I feel I am alone in the world, and yet some very beautiful young men actually fall in love with me, and think I have nothing to do but fall in love right away with every one of them. Oh, you dandies and empty heads, if you only knew how I despise you, with your arrogant,



conceited, smugly self-satisfied airs, without a question to ask, while I, day and night, seek to get at one question which shall contain every other that is worth putting! I am not sent, like Hamlet, by any cursed spite into a world which is out of joint, to set it right. No, far from any such hopeless mission, I only want to put a question which compels, on account of its lucidity and directness, an answer. That does not seem much, surely. But I cannot do it, nor, if I could, is there an audience sufficiently intelligent to listen to it, for that which should form an audience goes about its sordid occupation as if it carried around with it the needed answer to all questions. Alas! my question has, it seems to me, in some vague way to concern itself with right and wrong, and these nice-enough-looking men, who expect me to reciprocate the love they make to me, are not exactly walking exhibitions of what I think is right. But I have no positive idea of what right or wrong is. I know heaps of people, mostly of my own sex, who think me grossly immoral; and doubtless, from their point of view, they are right: only, from my point of view, I think their point of view in itself immoral, whereby it follows that they themselves cannot to me be the fit judges of my immorality. Personally, I am convinced I am the most guileless nonentity in a world of nonentities, among whom are admittedly a few—so few—magnificent exceptions. One strange thing strikes me. Every time I get within measurable range of intelligibly formulating my question, the person to whom I address myself seems to get wind of some subtle motive that

I have in view. He or she appears to me to think that I am trying to compel him or her to become the fulcrum on which the Archimedian lever is to move the moral world. Otherwise people are not in a hurry to close the conversation. They rather delight in making fun of my seriousness. But sooner or later, owing to my method of extending the range of inquiry, so that my particular auditor feels indeed that he must be also included, if what I want to express is true, his interest wanes, and he manages to escape. Now, there is nothing further from my thoughts, which are the most innocent possible. I harbour no kind of motive whatever which shall make this or that particular person bear a burden for all at my dictation. If he has himself previously, however, taken responsibility on his own shoulders, that is his business, and not mine. I notice it is always those responsible persons who clear out quickest. In any case, a question has to be put, and that question must out somehow, whether a Duke or a Bishop takes offence at being forced to listen to it. So here I innocently stand, confessing that I could not formulate what made up the sum and substance of my own thoughts. Naturally the growing consciousness of my own incapacity to say what I want, to outwardly utter what inwardly kept gnawing at my heart, drove me to read books on philosophy.

And these books, written by thoughtful and well-salaried professors in famous universities, ought surely to have contained what I sought. But they only increased my perplexity. What formerly, bad as that

was, I could only compare to a disagreeable rumbling in some remote part of my organism, now grew into an aggravated noise, which seemed to be made up of all the discordant cacophonies Pandemonium could produce. My head swam, but in what a sea! I know now that I was then enveloped in the delusion that lucidity and extent of knowledge progressed in parallel lines. I was often led on by finding in these deep books here and there a phrase which seemed to promise deliverance, only, however, to find myself cast back into a sea at whose bottom every sight which had affrighted poor Clarence magnified and then duplicated itself to make a still direr impression upon me. Only when I began to read philosophy did there begin in reality the tempest to my soul. That phrase which more than any other fixed itself on my memory was this question : *How is the synthetic proposition, à priori, possible?* The first time it swept within the ken of my vision it made little effect on me; the second it made a marked impression; the third it gripped me with the power of an octopus. For long it was to me what a rosary is to a Roman Catholic. I went to bed with it and I got up with it. At first it proved a delusive kind of balm to my troubled soul, a kind of mirage in a desert, and after I had got it off by heart; and made sure of correct pronunciation and order of words, I proceeded to propound it to all and sundry who could be induced to listen to it. The results were amusingly varied, but uniformly unsatisfactory to me, and soon I drifted into a state of greater unrest than

ever. But the phrase never relaxed its hold on me, and stuck with as shameless and grim determination as the tramway jingle about the conductor who was to punch a blue trip slip for a six-cent fare in the presence of the passengare did to Mark Twain. I, however, never found the person who relieved me as Mark was relieved of his burden by repetition. So the phrase grew on to me till it became part and parcel of me. Along with the bogey of the Categorical Imperative, it was the medium to me of the acutest agony. My good reputation for a lady-like manner was threatened because I sometimes asked, with extreme irritability, how the Synthetic Proposition was, *à priori*, possible. But just think over it, dear reader, and fancy if ever a question of any kind at all troubled you, what it would mean to you to be harnessed to a monster like this? To my immediate friends I became the incarnation of boredom, to my lovers a blue-stockings which my personal appearance flatly contradicted; to my near relations, good, honest, orthodox folk, whom nothing ever bothered except the (to them) incredible, because novel, sight of seeing any one bothered about spiritual matters, a shameless atheist—nothing milder would suit them than that taking word atheist; and to my many acquaintances only a fool of a girl, a missy, a chit who thought she was clever. Me! thinking myself clever! If they had only known! I always had the idea of the reverse—namely, that those who are so confident just on that which is a continual source of argument, must be the clever folk; to know what

dissension proves is not known. But let that pass. I asked one day a celebrated Professor of Philosophy how this self-same *synthetic proposition was, à priori, possible*, in italics and without capitals. But if the soft italics were present as I humbly breathed my petition to the great authority, my outer calm was in no wise a true indication of my inner feeling. I was burning, I was on the point of convulsions. He answered in Romans and Capitals, without a sign of agitation. "All the Forms of Synthesis, which are necessary to a Consciousness of the Unity of the World of Objects, have an *à priori* Justification for their Application to the Manifold of Perception ; but in saying this, we have to remember that as Self-Consciousness is a Return to an Identity which comes to exist as such Identity only in the very Process we call a Return, so the Recognition of the Conception as the Principle of the Synthesis of Imagination in Perception is the Recognition of that which, as such Principle, has never been known before." If a weapon, a poker, a knife, had been handy, I would then and there have committed a crime and gone cheerfully to the gallows, shouting words of courage to—alas! what am I saying—to whom? Where were my multitude of friends who were to me what comrade anarchists are to those benighted individualists who stab or shoot or blow up an emperor, an empress, or a president—these innocent leaders of society who carry out their most thankless tasks with the best goodwill? Why, indeed, should not a stage come, in the evolutionary annals of assassination,

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since everything, we are told nowadays, evolves, when preachers are killed in their pulpits and professors of philosophy in their chairs, instead of hard-worked, amiable heads of states? Well, I am no assassin, but if ever I came dangerously near being one it was then and there, as this explanation passed through one and out at the other ear. Oh Heavens! What I looked like I know not; but what I said, with the sweetest smile—and I am very much too unaffected not to know that I can smile sweetly—and in the calmest manner, with perhaps just a suspicion of irritation, was: “Yes, I know all of that well enough; but How is the Synthetic Proposition, *À Priori* Possible?” putting special emphasis on the *à priori*. I now myself had dropped the italics, and inserted capitals. I never got any further answer. Some one drew my worthy professor’s attention off me. It was a brother conspirator in clerical garb, who wanted to know the Professor’s opinion regarding the advisability of asking the Pope to take part in a forthcoming Peace Conference! I groaned audibly, and sickened at the thought of these people contributing anything to peace; to mine, at any rate.

So bound up now was my interrogative anguish with this phrase that on occasions I put it when intending to ask quite other things. Once, for instance, I went into a milliner’s shop to buy sixpence worth or so of a pretty ribbon for my hat. I never use feathers or any limbs of birds shot or poisoned in order to adorn females’ hats. I like very much a simple straw hat with a coloured ribbon. Nothing sits better on a head where clever and

tasteful hands have known how to arrange the natural hair so that that remains after all the chief ornament of a woman's head. And I like so much fitting different ribbons to and making up new bows for the same hat. Any way I find that those gentlemen who favour me with their addresses—and they are many, but not too many, for I like it—are just as much attracted by my straw hat and pretty ribbons as by the gorgeous plumes and wonderful gardens which other girls affect. I could say a good deal on this matter, but in the meantime it has not very much to do with the question we have in hand.

I had laid a half-sovereign on the counter, and of course had to get a lot of change out of it. But instead of going straight to get what I wanted, the shopman (such a nice, good-looking fellow he was too) looked so astonished that it suddenly flashed across me that I had asked him for sixpence-worth of synthetic propositions, *à priori*. I turned crimson and fled from the shop, leaving my half-sovereign, which I can ill spare, on the counter. Never have I summoned up courage to return for it. And yet I cannot quite forget that I should have had a new ribbon for my hat, and change in my purse. I often wonder what length of Synthetic Propositions, *à priori*, I could have got for a sixpence if the nice-looking shopman had been able to supply me? More than ever the Professor could do, I am convinced.

Well, these are just a couple of day experiences, and now I must relate one of the night. I tried hard, after these two events and many similar ones, to suppress my

desire to ask questions on the subject next my heart in these same words ; and to some extent I succeeded. But when asleep I found it impossible. My dreams were one perpetual hunt for the man who could answer my question by telling me How the Synthetic Proposition is, *à priori*, possible. Dreams, as we all know, are essentially things which go their own way in their own world, and do not ask us to pilot their queer adventures. Now what I am going to relate I should need in any case to wind up with the ancient phrase, "And lo ! it was a dream," if I do not now, indeed, begin with it. I am personally, you will see, not responsible for my dream. I just tell it as it occurred to me, but that "Lo !" has always struck me as possessing a profound and suggestively apologetic significance. Why could not one say simply "It was a dream," as one sings it to lovely music. Fancy setting "Lo ! it was a dream," to good music ! That "Lo !" I am convinced means to say something like this : "Don't hold me responsible for what I was led into dreaming when asleep. Dreams do not run their course at the bidding of the dreamer. What it is that actually does order the incidents, I do not know ; and hence to in some measure replace all this ignorance, the account of the dream is usually concluded with a 'Lo !'" It has really a deep significance, this simple-looking interjection, this self-same 'Lo !' The reader, then, is aware that what I am about to relate was Lo ! a dream.

I was hurrying through the streets deadly intent on finding 'some likely-looking object on whom I could



inflict my question. Gradually it dawned on me that I was leaving behind the busy thoroughfares and entering on some vast plain of which I alone occupied the centre—a plain whose horizon stretched on every side into darkness. Presently, however, I detected that figures occupied four corners; and while two of these corners were occupied by solitary individuals, the other two were populated by a large multitude. They kept rigidly to their own corners, with the exception of one individual, who invaded two other corners; but this fact did not prevent an extreme and lively interest being manifested by each in the doings of the other—and this interest was to a great extent occasioned by the extraordinary actions and mad freaks of that one who, as already mentioned, invaded the corners of others, and made his own only a starting- and returning-point. While I now observed how free he made with the domains of the two populated corners, which abutted at right angles on his own, I also observed that he never passed through them or crossed transversely into the other corner, which was likewise occupied by only a solitary figure. He always returned to his own. The populated corners seemed, furthermore, to recognise a head or leader, or rather a centre, and I soon noticed that the attitude of both the populace to head and of the head to the populace in each domain was strikingly different. This was mainly apparent when the first-mentioned solitary individual invaded their domains. The fourth corner was also occupied by one individual, whom it was not so easy at first sight to distinguish, therefore I

think I should explain the effect the sight of the doings of the others had on me, after first giving the names of the solitary individuals and the leaders of the populated corners. I very soon was enabled to recognise them, owing to my reading of philosophical books and acquaintanceship with the terminology that the writers of such books are wont to employ.

First, then, by himself came the individual who rushed here and there, and avoided the corner opposite him. His name was Mr. Universal Nature. On his right I recognised as leader or centre of the populace Mr. Fanciful Abstraction, and on his left the other leader, Mr. Quantitative Particular; while opposite him was placed the less distinguishable object Mr. Qualitative Particular.

The curiosity evoked in one corner by the differences which were manifest in any other outside itself was very remarkable: but at the same time Mr. Qualitative Particular was made an exception to this rule; he took notice of all, but none of him.

Inside, among the populace of each corner, certain marked differences, which to me were very conspicuous, excited little or no interest. These differences in dress, customs, etc., etc., seemed to me to form, as it were, the visible background against which the populated corners were distinguishable. But in addition to this visible background there was another kind which I had never noticed in my waking experience. And it was just as well that this other unusual background existed; otherwise, of the two solitary individuals it would have been hard to give a definite account. The first background

was, then, a visible background, the second an audible. The populated corners possessed this visible background only in virtue of their different individualities, different dresses, buildings, customs, etc. The solitary individuals had no proper visible background. That of Mr. Universal Nature stretched into utter darkness ; that of Mr. Qualitative Particular into a luminous cloudland which was uniform in the ruddy glow of its appearance. But something or another was behind it—I could guess that. The audible background streamed forth from each as the sound of music, and was just as strikingly explanatory of the situations as the visible—indeed, much more so. I think I must, however, keep at present to the visible alone.

The picture offered to the eye by Mr. Fanciful Abstraction's domain was one immense city, fading into country, with gorgeous buildings, palaces, temples, obelisks, idols, statues, processions, ceremonies, invocations, rites, jewels, adornments, uniforms, paint, and advertisements ; and the particular individual who stood as head in the centre of the crowd was just that one who was given possession of most of these treasures, and took most of the paint and advertisements. He was very proud of the exceptional position he held, and was the centre of interest and appreciation. He was nearest approached by those who possessed the next greatest amount of these adornments, except in the case of absolute menials, who were done up in a way that did not offend the eye, although it was obvious their adornments had no real value, but were only meant not to disturb the outward harmony of appearances. Where

the populace were deprived of what accompanied and glorified the centre of attraction, I noticed a certain discontent arising from poverty, which was, however, too disorganised to effect an entrance into the magnificent centre of the community. The liveried menials who had access to this centre could not disguise their real affinity with the poverty-stricken and discontented populace, but evidently the showy liveries they wore and the close proximity they enjoyed to the head and centre of the community amply sufficed to destroy what natural sympathy they had for their own plebeian relations away from such a centre. But they were indeed treated, in their subordinate positions, with wonderful respect and kindness, at least outwardly—a treatment which contrasted very favourably with the shameful impudence and mimicry these selfsame well-fed menials indulged in when their masters' back was turned. It was evident to me that their good service was only bought at a severe price, and I could not help thinking the poverty-stricken suburban populace in some rather indirect and disconnected way paid for this sham service. Such was the general visible aspect of this community. As to the audible, I will return to it after describing the visible background of the others. It will be best to take first the populated corner of Mr. Quantitative Particular. The contrast with that of Mr. Fanciful Abstraction was indeed striking. In the place of buildings of gorgeous appearance, in the place of ceremonies, uniforms, and all such distinguishing marks of nobility, there was present a practical utilitarian demeanour which turned every action into a fearfully

hasty diligence, with a set purpose. Rest and leisure, enjoyment and relaxation, might be said to be unknown, for where such pursuits were purposely indulged in, the conscious stress and strain were so prominent, the interest was so deadly, that to call them rest, leisure, enjoyment, and relaxation, is an abuse of the names. Buildings were simply laboratories ; work was the one and main pursuit ; and so enveloped was everything in dust and smoke, such a haste seemed to dominate the actions of all, each, except in cases of sickness or injury, so intent on his own business, that the confusion, the bustle, and the restlessness, were bewildering.

Some of these people did nothing but talk, others kept a microscope continually to their eyes, others telescopes. Machines of innumerable kinds were in constant use, and neither day nor night saw peace and quiet. If a man got ill by constant application to work a talker came in and made him read a long advertisement on pills, which the ill man eagerly swallowed, advertisement and all, with the result that he paid away money and became worse. And yet by his side he might hear another lecturing on the beneficial effects of exercise, rest, and fresh air, whom, however, he would answer with the complaint there was no time to seek them, else his business would suffer. One healthy-looking and jolly countryman, I noticed, was most energetic on this question of the beneficial effects of exercise and fresh air. He was a Member of Parliament, where most of the talking was done. His sensible advice I thought he would back up by practical help

from his seat in Parliament. But no. There he successfully opposed a Bill which had been introduced with the aim of opening up a most unhealthy district, crowded by poor people, who had dirty water and little of it, bad food, and bad drainage. I noticed, also, that the interest which the other corner manifested in this was conspicuous, when this Bill was defeated, through the undisguised demonstrations of joy with which its defeat was regarded by Mr. Fanciful Abstraction and his near surroundings. The poor, discontented populace seemed to become still more discontented. But it was the peculiar manners and habits of the solitary inhabitant of the third corner, Mr. Universal Nature, which made the striking differences between these two corners most marked. This individual, as I said already, had a habit of invading the two domains in a way which was not exactly pleasant to their occupants. He came and went uninvited, a fact which was very noticeable if contrasted with the behaviour of the other solitary individual, Mr. Qualitative Particular, who never approached any one, but stood as if ready to welcome all to his own corner. We must, however, confine ourselves in the meantime to Mr. Universal Nature. Nothing could withstand him. Clothes, shelter, ceremony, etc., he had none. He rushed everywhere, and regarded nothing. What came in his way fell before him, and the whole endeavours of the inhabitants of the two corners were only able, and that but in a slight degree, to affect the incidence of his motions: the sum remained the same. Certainly, whether this particular man or that

particular house was overwhelmed and ruthlessly destroyed, I saw it was in the power of the inhabitants to partially obviate ; but the destructive force in its total sum and aggregate was never in the slightest degree altered by all human ingenuity. At the same time the inhabitants seemed fatuously confident that because their efforts warded off Mr. Universal Nature's fearfully blind and unreasonable rushes from certain individuals and certain quarters, which it seemed, but only seemed, he aimed at with design, therefore his destructive influence was being undermined and successfully combated. Could these benighted individuals only have attained any position, how different they would have seen things ! But the most painfully observant fact lay in the attitudes of the heads of these different corners. I noticed that with Mr. Fanciful Abstraction, all his endeavours were directed towards providing that he was protected, by the mass which surrounded him, from the effects of Mr. Universal Nature's rushes. And the mass seemed willingly to grant him what he desired. Protected he certainly was, and with success ; and the strangest thing about it was that when he deigned to preach or talk to this mass remote from him he affected with tears in his eyes to adore a being who had been conspicuously the most fatal victim of this blind rush of Mr. Universal Nature ; and the mass listened with tears in its eyes. When he preached, Mr. Fanciful Abstraction would say "Call no man Lord," but if any one failed to call him Lord, or even hesitated to pay him a formal respect, he soon was relegated to that

outside position which was most open to the deadly rushes of Mr. Universal Nature. And then Mr. Fanciful Abstraction looked as if his own person were unspeakably grateful for the obvious protection accorded him by his surroundings, but perfectly unable in any practical way to account for the favour. So he looked away from the populace who so manifestly protected him, into the skies, and spoke, with a great smile on his features, of how he owed all to "God"; whereon the populace fell down before him and innocently looked as if it had not protected him enough. I thought sometimes I saw Mr. Fanciful Abstraction give a small smile and wink to a favoured individual and menial who stood next him, but I was not quite sure. There was very little of Mr. Fanciful Abstraction's features which was capable of dealing in small things, even smiles. Nothing he gave away was big enough, but that was all talk; nothing he took was big enough, but all that he took was material goods. He always had his hand held out for more, and often took when others were not watching him.

What a different spectacle the corner of Mr. Quantitative Particular presented when Mr. Universal Nature caused untold misery by his mad rushes! Here it was easy to observe an ardent desire on the part of the leaders of the many laboratories to put themselves before the intruder, and to voluntarily intercept him, in order to save the less favoured and the already suffering of the community from further misery. But the delusion from my central position consisted in the mistaken



heroism which, in this case, as well as in the other, never succeeded in diminishing by one fraction the sum of the ravages of Mr. Universal Nature. None the less, the contrast between the open, unselfish bravery of Mr. Quantitative Particular and the sneaking, egoistic cowardice of Mr. Fanciful Abstraction, was a remarkable feature. The populace, however, never showed itself in any marked degree grateful or willing to acknowledge this unquestionable generosity and self-sacrifice of the leader who was persistently trying, for the sake of the populace, to attain practical, and at the same time good, results. When, however, such a leader had fallen a victim to his own generosity, then some belated interest was indeed manifested in his past career, and subscriptions poured in to erect a monument to him, and long eulogistic notices appeared in the daily papers. I saw that these eulogistic obituary notices were lying ready written for the expected and inevitable demise, while all the time the populace, including in some instances the very writer of the eulogistic notice, were practically making their generous and self-sacrificing leader's life miserable, to the manifest glee of Mr. Fanciful Abstraction in his corner, who furthermore, I cannot help thinking, instigated in some indirect way these ill-timed and ungrateful actions of the working populace in Mr. Quantitative Particular's corner. One curious thing, at any rate, was this—namely, that when the statue to the heroic opposer of Mr. Universal Nature came ultimately to be put up, it was done in Mr. Fanciful Abstraction's corner, and not in Mr. Quantitative

Particular's at all. No one else, indeed, was invited to perform the unveiling ceremony than Mr. Fanciful Abstraction in all his glory; and on this occasion he wore his most very unctuous smile. Nothing in ceremony was pleasanter to him; he said he always did it at his own personal inconvenience, but that he never allowed to stand between him and his duty, and so on—that was just his talk, I noticed. His smile was something to behold with awe and astonishment, but to me it in no wise differed from that which he wore when he had interested himself in the sad fall of the self-sacrificing individual before the mad rush of Mr. Universal Nature. All of this caused an inexpressibly sad feeling in my heart. How I felt that something was wanting!—only what was it now that was wanting? The question I wanted all my life to put seemed in my dream to connect itself in some vague way with this feeling of Want.

I then turned my attention to the corner of Mr. Qualitative Particular. As I have said already, he was not so distinguishable at first glance as the others, whose doings thrust themselves on me on account of the strong light which, from some unknown quarter, poured itself on their corners. But in the corners of both Mr. Universal Nature and Mr. Qualitative Particular, light played a different *role*. In fact, in the case of the former, his presence would never have been known unless he had invaded the corners of Mr. Fanciful Abstraction and Mr. Quantitative Particular. His own was dark and black. But that of Mr. Qualitative Particular had a glowing, luminous background, and some

careful and steady observation allowed his figure to become plain. He was young and he was fair; his motions were pictures of grace. His countenance beamed with a joyful expectation. He inclined himself in this direction and in that with an inviting air of playful aristocratic superiority, which was all the more attractive because there was a manifest intention on his part to leave it to others to seek him out. He never went into the corners of either Mr. Fanciful Abstraction or Mr. Quantitative Particular, and, as regards Mr. Universal Nature, there seemed to be an entire absence of any recognition. At times he would lightly, with his graceful step, approach close to the boundary of Mr. Quantitative Particular. On such an occasion Mr. Quantitative Particular seemed to expect that Mr. Qualitative Particular would pass over to him; and, in fact, an almost agonised look betokened a desire that such an event would take place. But I knew well enough, by the knowledge I had gleaned from the audible background (which I have not yet dwelt on), that such a thing was impossible. There was no agonised look on the face of Mr. Qualitative Particular, but there was an interested look, and that said more in the way of invitation than all sadness could do. He displayed no appearance of want, and he never occupied himself with strained endeavours to oppose the ravages of Mr. Universal Nature. It was a marked feature of his conduct that, although he did come very near the boundary of Mr. Quantitative Particular, he kept far away from that of Mr. Fanciful Abstraction. But in certain

cases, when he was more on this side than on the other, I observed that Mr. Fanciful Abstraction sent menials to Mr. Qualitative Particular's boundary to converse with him. I also overheard these menials (Mr. Fanciful Abstraction never deigned to come himself) invite Mr. Qualitative Particular to dinner ; and he seemed quite willing to accept the invitation, and partake of all the good things with which Mr. Fanciful Abstraction had provided himself, if only the table was spread in his corner. But some hitch occurred, because the menials objected to this, and added that after the dinner there was to follow the grand theatrical performance of Sir Welsh Rarebit, from the Grand Imperial and Royal Harmonic Theatre and Opera House, in his grand and successful play, with magnificent, unparalleled scenery, called "The Sign of the Fish." Mr. Qualitative Particular greeted this solemnly accorded invitation with such a genuine and hearty burst of unrestrained laughter that the menials were shocked, and retired in offended haste to tell Mr. Fanciful Abstraction of the insulting reception his kind invitation had received. The great man looked very grieved, and sent his menials back to let Mr. Qualitative Particular know that he would pray for him, so that he would be led to see the errors of his ways in treating holy matters and holy people with such downright disrespect. Mr. Qualitative Particular did not seem to be much influenced for the better by the message, but rather for the worse, for he did a thing which, with my strict bringing-up, has always been associated with rudeness and bad manners.

But I very much doubt whether any one who saw Mr. Qualitative Particular do as he did, would accuse him of either rudeness or bad manners. His grace, his good humour and frankness, were too obvious to permit of malice being entertained for a moment. What he did was to apply his thumb to his nose, pointing his fingers directly towards where Mr. Fanciful Abstraction sat in gorgeous splendour, and said in a voice which that worthy very evidently heard quite plainly, "Pray for yourself, old man; you stand much in need of some one to pray for you." I saw that Mr. Fanciful Abstraction got very red in the face, and hastily motioned to his menials to return to him; but the clatter of dishes, the uncorking of bottles, the savoury smell of the viands, the arrival of guests in wonderful displays of uniforms and orders and ribbons on the part of the males, and of jewels and bare bosoms on the part of the females, restored to his face the old smile and look of satisfaction.

It must now be my endeavour to explain that which admits of no explanation. What one can only attain in virtue of feeling, in company with others, is not a subject of theoretical explanation. And thus I cannot pretend to do more than just say that, in addition to what I saw, there existed apart an audible background which in streaming forth to me in music characterised the doings of the personages in these corners with even more completeness than the visible background. From Mr. Fanciful Abstraction's corner I heard only one pompous processional music, which neither arose from any human heart nor touched the human chord in mine. It was all

an impossible music to the glory of a common spiritual beauty. It was centred in the worship of one object, around which all others paraded in solemn voluntary subjection. Something of the nature of the march in Meyerbeer's *Prophet*, one word characterised it, and that was 'grand.' It sounded grand; but how many were able to share in it? To see the menials all in mechanical motion, tramping like prisoners on a treadmill, chanting the glory of another who did nothing but exact still more formal worship and praise; to see a crowd of half-witted, impoverished people blankly staring at a thing of nobility, whose nobleness had to be taken for granted in virtue solely of what sheer advertisement all sorts of outer decorations and titles offered; which of the three—the central object, the servile menials, the half-witted public—was the real object of contempt? Well, the one who assumed the most conscious responsibility, it seemed to me.

As to Mr. Universal Nature, his music consisted of a brazen fanfare in octaves and fifths. The more deadly his rush, the louder blazed his fanfare. The blinder the rush, the more senseless the din. Since there was no variation, I have nothing to dwell on.

Music in the laboratory of Mr. Quantitative Particular consisted of a good deal more than a fanfare; but after all its resources had either reduced Art to artificiality or labelled natural sounds music, it was a question whether the resulting din came nearer my idea of music than that of Mr. Universal Nature. It seemed to be a business of Mr. Quantitative Particular to worry a certain phrase

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either into one monstrous incessant figure or inflict in every place at every time on every one strains which, although I cannot deny them to have been music, did not seem any more necessary to the occasions, the places, or the people, than if the infliction had been reversed in their order of bringing. Why, if we can go to a concert without taking our dinners to eat as we listen to it, can we not dine without having musical sounds thrust on our ears? Why, if we go to a theatre to hear a spoken drama, which was written with no thought of music, must music keep interrupting the course of the drama? In Mr. Quantitative Particular's corner, music was taken from one laboratory and thrown pell-mell into the doings of another. No one seemed to understand that under such conditions the two never could fit, and that what was more or less worthy in itself was only rendered intolerable when forced into double harness of this kind. If one laboratory, however, turned out a work in which music was no longer hauled in by the hair, so to speak, the very people who had been in no wise offended at the former patent incongruities, raised up their voices in indignant protest when now both play and music were issued from the same laboratory. From theatres and plays to fireworks and dinners, from clocks and albums to orchestrions and church bells, it was so much music from morning to night that it resulted in no music, but became a bugbear. In the laboratories where the toil of producing was indulged in with the same grim determination as might be seen on the faces of men who worked in coal-mines, yellow-skinned, hard-looking,

and stiff-limbed individuals superintended the youthful attempts of students. When they were not superintending, they set to work to produce themselves. Once I noticed that a rather pretty, happy-looking lad brought a composition to one of these yellow-skinned superintendents. As it was played over where every possible combination of a few beggarly poverty-stricken notes was under obligation to be hunted out and exposed to the ear, I was grateful when I experienced a real relief from this persecuting and worrying of a wretched phrase, and heard something that appealed to my innocent feelings. But my yellow-skinned friend got angry, severely reproached his pupil, put his blue pencil through a whole sheet, and sent him away to make it "correct." When the pupil came back with it, it was "correct" evidently, for the yellow-skinned superintendent smiled a sickly smile of satisfaction, and grinned approval. But the pretty, happy-looking youth looked ten years older already, and my heart would have sunk with despair had not such a lovely harmony from the corner of Mr. Qualitative Particular been reaching my ear and pervading my person.

As in the case of the personal figure of Mr. Qualitative Particular, there lay an inviting, alluring charm in the very indistinctness of the sound which streamed forth from his corner. Naturally, then, my inquisitive nature turned readily towards it. Could it be that here my question was to get an answer? With the others everything had been too evident, too bare, too satiating, for my longing, unquenchable thirst. Some things do



so declare all there is in them of worth on their surface. And now a curious thing happened. The mere desire to get a closer acquaintance with what, in spite of its obscurity, possessed such a luminous background for both eye and ear, caused me to drift towards Mr. Qualitative Particular. Where there is a will there is a way, I have often been told; and so I now found, to my unspeakable satisfaction. The pompous marches of Mr. Fanciful Abstraction, the blaring fanfare of Mr. Universal Nature, the complicated and laboriously put together counterpoint of Mr. Quantitative Particular, faded more and more into the distance. A joyous, peaceful harmony seemed to supplant them. And as I came nearer to Mr. Qualitative Particular's corner the distinctness of his figure and of his features grew, and I saw before me, with outstretched arms awaiting me, a beautiful god-like figure of that which, when awake, I must confess to have a strong liking for, in even very inferior examples. Mr. Qualitative Particular was an Apollo in veritable human flesh and blood. He was the Hellenic classical Faust whom I, the modern romantic Helen, was eager to meet. And as I came nearer he advanced with such a joyful look to meet me, I seemed to have loving arms wound round my neck, and to be covered with kisses. And now, with an ever-growing leaning in the harmony towards distinctness and melody, we approached the luminous curtain. But there was nothing audible that did not grow out of the union of our two selves. The close embrace seemed to transform the harmony into a melody of which no other sound but its own

could express the meaning. Rhythm was barely recognisable. There was no drama ; there was only pure love. Gently the curtain-like background was pushed aside, and we passed into realms of ever serener light. Then the melody rose above all, and became distinct to my ears as none other than what I had so often enjoyed on earth. It was the slow movement of Beethoven's ninth symphony. Our melody was ideal, and its sincerity was unclouded. But what was that grating feeling that passed through me as if it were a spasm? Had I brought into this loving, speechless element the elements of doubt, of questioning, of thought? Alas! alas! in the very midst of ideal joy, in the loving embrace, and under the soft kisses of my own beloved, I was still a prey to the old gnawing desire to put my unframable question. But now, as then, held close in the arms of my long-sought ideal, the desire refused to shape itself in words. I struggled to hold the desire back, but in vain. My lips stammered to utter what I could not utter, and with a semi-consciousness of the sublimely ridiculous inappropriateness of the occasion, I felt myself looking up into the face of my beloved and asking him, in a hard voice: *How is the synthetic proposition, à priori, possible?* I know not how Lucifer felt in heaven when he committed his unpardonable sin, but if my exceptionable position in any measure helped me to gauge the enormity of his crime, I did gauge it then. My fate seemed to hang for a moment in the balance. Was I to be hurled back into the regions of one of those dismal confusions I had left behind,

or was I to be everlastingly damned to some region whose terrors nothing could depict? I ventured, with fearful expectancy, to look up into the face of my beloved, and I saw the joyful look slowly spread out into one of such uncontrollable laughter that it made us both shake with its impulsiveness. In spite of a sense of a terrible fate awaiting me, I must confess I was considerably offended by the abruptness and utter want of respect which his laughter revealed. But I found it was impossible to avoid the contagion of its downright genuineness and heartiness, and soon I felt myself laughing in company with him at my own discomfiture. Again I glanced up to see whether or how he would answer my question. I felt a still more loving embrace, a still longer and sweeter kiss imprinted on my lips; and so, it seemed to me, to my feelings, was answered what could never frame itself in words. Then the melody covered us up, till I awoke to find, as usual, that it was a dream.

It taught me something, certainly, and no one has since heard me ask such a question. But I have more lovers than ever, who seem to wish to put a question to me. Shall I answer the selected one of them: All the forms of synthesis which are necessary to a consciousness of the unity of the world of objects have an *à priori* justification—but no; I am determined not to recall another word of it.

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